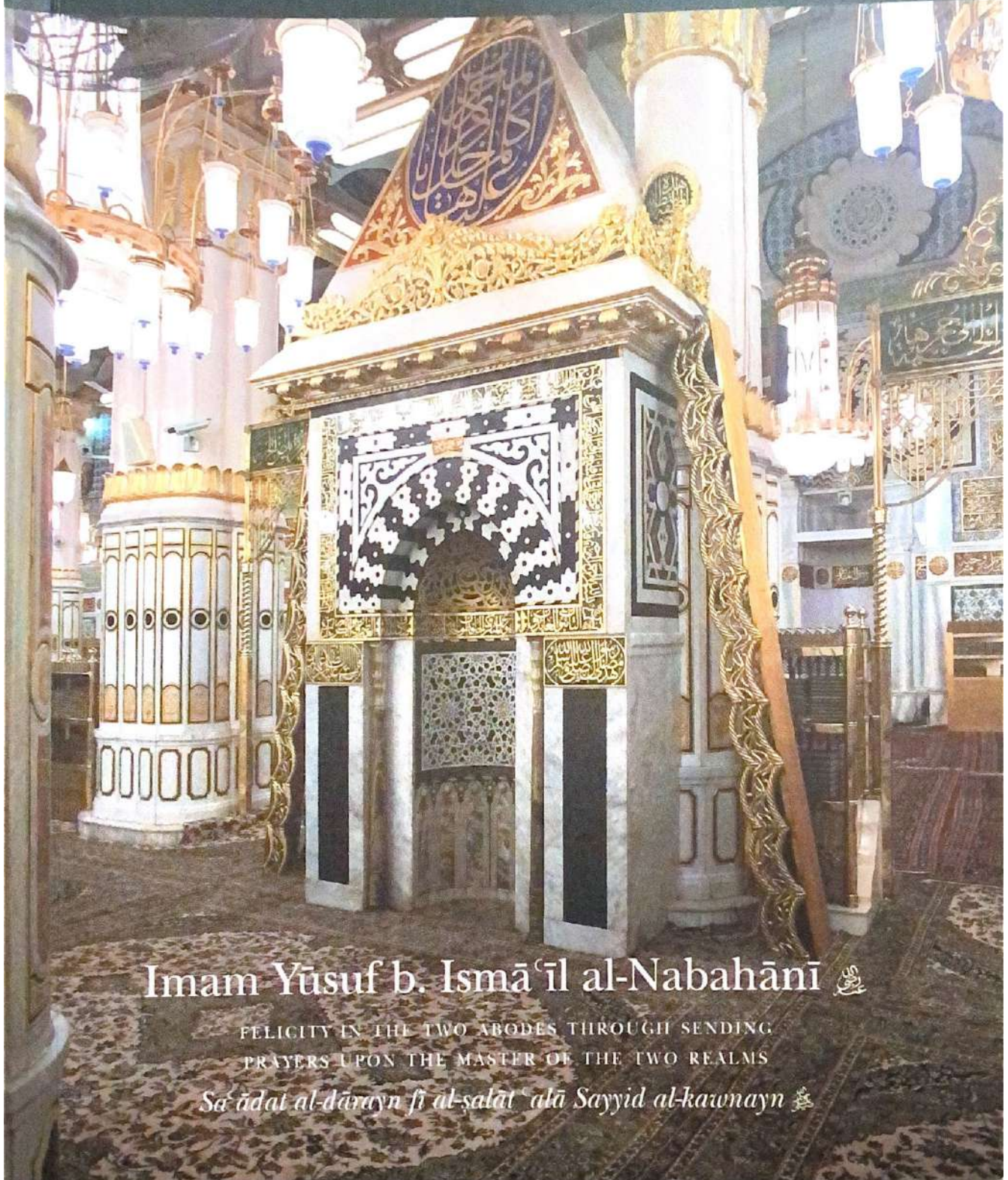


VOLUME TWO

COMMENTARY ON THE ABRAHAMIC PRAYER



Imam Yūsuf b. Ismā'īl al-Nabahānī

FELICITY IN THE TWO ABODES THROUGH SENDING
PRAYERS UPON THE MASTER OF THE TWO REALMS

Sa'ādāt al-dārayn fī al-salāt alā Sayyid al-kawnayn

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Imam Yūsuf b. Ismā'īl al-Nabahānī

Translated by Abdul Aziz Suragah



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IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, the Compassionate, the Merciful.
All praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds. And may prayers and salutations be upon our master Muhammad, and upon his family and Companions.

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Muhammad Junaid al-Ridāwī
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Biography of Sheikh Yūsuf b. Ismā'īl al-Nabahānī

HE IS THE erudite scholar and “poet of the Prophet ﷺ,” Sheikh Yūsuf b. Ismā'īl b. Yūsuf b. Ismā'īl b. Muḥammad Nāsir al-Dīn al-Nabahānī. Born in the village of Iyzim near Haifa, Palestine in the year 1265 AH (1849 CE), Sheikh Yūsuf al-Nabahānī received a pious upbringing and learned the Qurān from his father, the masterful memorizer and reciter Sheikh Ismā'īl al-Nabahānī, about whom al-Nabahānī said, “My father’s daily and nightly liyanī used to consist of reading one third of the Qurān, and then later he would complete the Qurān three times every week, and all praise is for Allah!” After memorizing the Qurān under the instruction of his father, al-Nabahānī received permission to travel to Cairo, Egypt, where in 1283 AH (1866 CE) he began his formal Islamic studies in the Great Mosque of al-Azhar and remained there until 1289 AH (1872 CE).

He says of himself during this period:

During that time, I learned all that Allah had decreed for me to learn of the sciences of the Sacred Law and its ancillary disciplines from accomplished and realized sheikhs and firmly grounded scholars who, if they had set out individually to a region, they would be the leaders of the people to the Gardens of bliss and would suffice them from needing any others in all of the required sciences...

His Teachers

Sheikh Yūsuf al-Nabahānī says of his teachers:

One of them, or rather their peerless leader, was the singular and erudite master and refuge, the meticulous polymath and sheikh of sheikhs and teacher of teachers, my master Sheikh Ibrāhīm al-Saqqā al-Shāfiʿī, who passed away in 1298 AH, aged around ninety years. He spent his long blessed life in teaching, so much that the bulk of the scholars of our time are his students, either directly or through an intermediary. I kept up my lessons with him—may Allah have mercy on him!—for three years and studied under his instruction Shaykh al-Islām Zakariyyā al-Anṣārī's commentary on *al-Tāhīr* and *al-Minhāj* respectively, both with the marginalia of al-Sharqāwī and al-Bujayrīmī.... My other teachers included:

- The venerable and erudite Sayyid Muhammad al-Damānhūrī al-Shāfiʿī, who passed away in 1286 AH at around ninety years of age.
- My master, the erudite Sheikh Ibrāhīm al-Zurrū al-Khalīfī al-Shāfiʿī, who passed away in 1287 AH at around seventy years old.
- The erudite scholar, my master Sheikh Ahmad al-Ajhūrī al-Harīr al-Shāfiʿī, who passed away in 1293 AH at around sixty years old.
- The erudite scholar, my master Sheikh Hasan al-'Adawī al-Mālikī, who passed away in 1298 AH at around eighty years old.
- The erudite scholar, my master Sheikh al-Sayyid 'Abd al-Hādī Najā al-Abyārī, who passed away in 1305 AH at just over seventy years old.

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- Sheikh Shams al-Dīn Muhammad al-Anbābī al-Shāfiʿī, the Master of al-Azhar Mosque, who passed away in 1313 AH.
- Sheikh Abd al-Rahmān al-Shirbīnī al-Shāfiʿī, Master of al-Azhar Mosque, who passed away in 1313 AH.
- Sheikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Rāfiʿī al-Hanafī al-Tarābulṣī, the master of the Levantine quarters in al-Azhar Mosque, who passed away in 1323 AH.
- Sheikh Yūsuf al-Barqāwī al-Hanbalī, the master of the Hanbalī quarters in al-Azhar Mosque.
- And many others, may Allah have mercy upon them all!

Sheikh Yūsuf al-Nabahānī's Career

In the year 1289 AH (1872 CE) after completing his studies at al-Azhar, Sheikh Yūsuf al-Nabahānī returned to his native Palestine, where in Akka he organized lessons teaching the sacred sciences and the Arabic language, and took a position one year later as an assistant judge in Jenin, where he remained until 1293 AH (1876 CE). He then moved to Constantinople, capital of the Ottoman Caliphate, where he worked on and off for several years as an editor of the Arabic periodical *al-Jamā'ih* and proofread the Arabic works that it published. He then left Constantinople for Iraq, where he settled for five months as a judge in Mosul, and soon resettled in Al-Lādhigiya and took a position as chief judge in its criminal court. After living there and serving as a judge for five years, Sheikh Yūsuf al-Nabahānī was transferred to Jerusalem and appointed chief judge of its criminal court, where he remained less than a year before being reassigned as chief judge of the criminal court of Beirut in 1305 AH. The Sheikh was to remain as chief judge in Beirut's criminal court until he retired in 1309 CE. After his retirement the Sheikh wrote

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and published the majority of his books and spent time in the Blessed City of the Prophet ﷺ, Medina, returning to his native Ijzim after the start of World War II in 1914 and remaining there until he passed away in the year 1350 AH (1932 CE).

Sheikh Yūsuf al-Nabahānī's Spiritual Teachers

Sheikh Yūsuf al-Nabahānī is rightfully considered one of the revivers of traditional spirituality. His books are filled with mention of the Sufī path and the spiritual masters and their teachings. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that Sheikh Yūsuf al-Nabahānī received investiture in numerous spiritual orders and from many Sheikhs. He received the Idrīsī order from Sheikh Ismā'īl al-Nāwawāb, the Shādhilī order from Muḥammad b. Mas'ūd al-Fāsi and 'Alī Nūr al-Dīn al-Yashrūū, the Naqshabandī order from Imdādullāh al-Fārūqī and Ghayāth al-Dīn al-Jubīlī, the Qādirī order from Hasan b. Abī Halāwa al-Ghazālī, the Rifā'ī order from 'Abd al-Qādir b. Abī Rabāh al-Dajānī al-Yāfiī, the Khalwānī order from Hasan Ridwān al-Sa'īdī, and the Tijānī order from Muḥammad b. Sūda al-Fāsi.

It bears mentioning that most of Sheikh Yūsuf al-Nabahānī's investitures in the abovementioned orders were for the sake of obtaining blessings (*tabarrukan*) and were not, properly speaking, for active spiritual wayfaring (*sulūk*). It is generally held that he was a member of the Shādhilī order for most of his life, although it is also said that he joined the Tijānī order later in his life. It is unlikely, however, that his investiture in the Tijānī order was for other than blessings, since it is widely known that he kept to a wide variety of litanies (*awrād*) received through several different orders, whereas an integral aspect of the Tijānī order is to forgo the litanies of all other orders besides its own.

Sheikh Yūsuf al-Nabahānī's Written Works

It is without exaggeration to say that Allah gifted Sheikh Yūsuf al-Nabahānī with a flowing pen that was put in service of the august Prophetic station. By the blessings of his love and intimate connection with the Prophet ﷺ and His illustrious Household, Sheikh Yūsuf al-Nabahānī wrote a staggering number of works dedicated to the Prophet, many of which form the curriculum in several traditional Islamic schools and seminaries. His works include:

- Afḍal al-salawāt 'alā Sayyid al-Sādāt* (The Most Virtuous Prayers upon the Master of Masters)
- Aḥsan al-wasā'il fī nazm asmā' al-Nabī al-Kāmil* (The Best of Means in Versifying the Names of the Perfect Prophet ﷺ)
- Al-Aḥādīth al-arba'īn fī faḍl Sayyid al-Mursalīn* (Forty Hadīth Reports on the Virtues of the Master of the Messengers ﷺ)
- Al-Aḥādīth al-arba'īn fī faḍl al-jihād wa al-mujāhādīn* (Forty Hadīth Reports on the Virtue of Jihad and Those Engaged in It)
- Al-Madāḥ al-arba'īn fī wujūb tā'at Amr al-Mu'minīn* (Forty Hadīth Reports on the Obligation of Rendering Obedience to the Commander of the Believers)
- Al-Aḥādīth al-arba'īn min amḥāl Aṣḥā al-Mursalīn* (Forty Hadīth Reports Containing Metaphors Uttered by the Most Eloquent of the Messengers ﷺ)
- Al-Anwār al-Muḥammadiyya* (The Muḥammadan Lights, an abridgment of Imām al-Qasṭalanī's *al-Mawāḥib al-Laduniyya*)
- Al-Arbā'īn al-arba'īn min aḥādīth Sayyid al-Mursalīn*

(Forty Times Forty Hadith Reports from the Master of the Messengers 𐤀)

—*Arba ʿūna hadithan fī arbaʿin sīghatin fī al-salāt alī al-Nabī* (Forty Hadith Reports on Forty Wordings of Prayers upon the Prophet 𐤀)

—*Arba ʿūna hadithan fī saddāʾil Ahl al-Bayt* (Forty Hadith Reports on the Virtues of the Prophetic House)

—*Arba ʿūna hadithan fī sadd ʾAbī Bakr 𐤀* (Forty Hadith Reports on the Virtue of Abū Bakr 𐤀)

—*Arba ʿūna hadithan fī sadd ʾAbī Bakr wa ʿUmar* (Forty Hadith Reports on the Virtues of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar 𐤀)

—*Arba ʿūna hadithan fī sadd ʾAlī* (Forty Hadith Reports on the Virtue of Ali 𐤀)

—*Arba ʿūna hadithan fī sadd arbaʿina Sahābiyyan* (Forty Hadith Reports on the Virtue of Forty Companions)

—*Arba ʿūn hadithan fī sadd ʾLā ʾiṭāha illā Allāh* (Forty Hadith Reports on the Merit of the Phrase “There is no god but Allah”)

—*Arba ʿūna hadithan fī sadd ʾʿUmar* (Forty Hadith Reports on the Virtue of ʿUmar 𐤀)

—*Arba ʿūna hadithan fī sadd ʾUḥmān 𐤀* (Forty Hadith Reports on the Virtue of Uḥmān 𐤀)

—*Al-Asātib al-ḥadīṭ a fī sadd al-Sahāba wa ʾiqnā ʾal-shīʿa* (The Marvelous Styles of Detaching the Virtue of the Companions and Persuading the Shiites)

—*Al-ʾAsmāʾ fī mā li Rasūlillāh 𐤀 min al-ʾasmāʾ* (The Loftiest Reach Concerning the Names of the Messenger of Allah 𐤀)

—*Al-Bashāʾir al-ʾimāniyya fī al-mubashshirāt al-manāniyya* (The Faith-borne Glad Tidings in Positive Dream Visions)

—*Al-Burhān al-musaddad fī ʾiḥbāʾ Nubuwwat Sayyidīnā*

Muḥammad 𐤀 (The Fortified Demonstrations of the Prophethood of our Master Muḥammad 𐤀)

—*Dafṭ al-ḥujjāt ilā aḥklāq al-ḥayyā* (The Guide of the Merchants to the Noble Qualities of Character of the Elite)

—*Al-Dalālat al-wāḍiḥāt shah Dalaʾil al-ḥayyāt* (The Clear Indications: Commentary upon *Dalaʾil al-ḥayyāt*)

—*Al-Taḥdhīr min ʾiḥkākāth al-suwar wa al-taswīr* (The Caution Against Keeping Photos and Taking Pictures)

—*Taḥbīh al-aqḥār ilā ḥikmat iqbal al-duyāʾ alā al-ḥuffār* (Bringing Attention to the Minds about the Wisdom behind the Disbeliever’s Worldly Affluence)

—*Taḥdhīb al-nuṣṣ fī tarīb al-durrīs* (An abridgement of al-Nawawī’s *Riyād al-sāliḥīn*)

—*Jamīʾ karāmāt al-Awliyāʾ* (Compendium of the Miracles of the Saints)

—*Jawāḥir al-bihar fī saddāʾil al-Nabī al-Mukḥār* (The Jewels of the Oceans Concerning the Virtues of the Chosen Prophet 𐤀)

—*Hujjāt Allāh ʾalā ʾālamīn fī muʾjizat Sayyid al-Mursalīn* (Allah’s Proof over all Creation in the Inimitable Miracles of the Master of the Messengers 𐤀)

—*Riyād al-janna fī aḥkār al-Kitāb wa al-Sunna* (Gardens of Paradise in the Invocations of the Quran and Sunna)

—*Sabīʾ al-najāt fī al-ḥubb fī Allāh wa al-ḥiḡd fī Allāh* (The Path of Salvation through Loving and Hating for Allah’s Pleasure)

—*Ṣa ʾādāt al-anām fī ʾiḥbāʾ dīn al-Islām wa taʾwīth al-farq baynahu wa bayn dīn al-nasānāt fī al-aqāʾid wa al-ḥikām* (The Felicity of Humanity Found in Following the Religion of Islam, and a Clarification of the Theological and Legal Differences between it and Christianity)

—*Sa'ādāt al-dīnayn fī al-salāt alā Sayyid al-kannayn* (Felicity in the two Abodes in Prayers upon the Master of the Two Realms)

—*Al-Sharḥ al-ʿamū ʿal-hadīth li Abī Muhammad* (Eternal Honor for the Family of Muhammad ۞)

—*Shawāhid al-haqq fī al-ṣiḡḡahā bi Sayyid al-Khāḍiq* (The Corroborations of Truth Regarding the Act of Seeking Aid from the Master of Creation ۞)

—*Wawāʾil al-ʿaṣuṣil ilā shamāʾil al-Rasūl ۞* (The Means of Spiritual Arrival through the Features of the Messenger ۞) §

§ The main references for this biography come from Sheikh Yūsuf al-Nābulhānī's brief autobiography appended to his *Ḥamī karāmāt al-ʿarḥāf*, as well as *Al-ʿadab al-Raʿzāq al-Bayḍī's* *Ḥikmat al-ḥadīth fī ḥikmah al-ḡayn al-thāḥiḥ al-ḥa*.

Introduction

OF ALL FIVE supplications recited by Muslims around the world, perhaps the most oft-repeated are the supplications connected with the five daily prayers, among which is the closing supplication called the *al-Salāt al-Ibrāhīmīyya*, or the Abrahamic Prayer, which extols our master Muhammad Seal of the Prophets ۞, his Purified Family, and links him to Prophet Ibrāhīm ۞, described in the Quran as “a nation unto himself.”

This commentary on the Abrahamic Prayer, taken from Sheikh Yūsuf al-Nābulhānī's *Sa'ādāt al-dīnayn fī al-salāt alā Sayyid al-kannayn* (Felicity in the Two Abodes Through Prayers upon the Master of the Two Realms), examines each phrase of the closing supplication and sheds light on their inner and outer meanings. What does it mean to “send prayers” upon the Prophet ۞? What is the meaning of the name Muhammad and what are its unique features? Who are the Prophet Muhammad's Family and why are they mentioned in our prayers? Why is Prophet Ibrāhīm ۞ included in the supplication? And what is the meaning of blessings when it comes to the master of the first and the last?

It may be said without qualification that the Muslim *ʿImma's* salvation and happiness lie in its love for and attachment to the Messenger of Allah ۞, and that conversely, its remote-

ness and tribulations stem from its distance and "coarseness" toward him.

In his *Musannaḡ*, Imam 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan'ānī related from Qatāda who said, "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, 'It is from coarseness [*jafā*] that I am mentioned in someone's presence yet he does not send prayers upon me.'"

And in an authentic hadith recorded by Ibn Khuzayma and Ibn Hibbān, it is related that Abū Hurayra رضي الله عنه said, "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ ascended the pulpit and said, 'Amen! Amen! Amen!' Someone remarked, 'O Messenger of Allah! You ascended the pulpit and said amen thrice!' The Prophet ﷺ said, 'Jibrīl عليه السلام came to me and said, 'O Muhammad! May Allah make remote the one who reaches the month of Ramaḡān yet is not forgiven and as a consequence enters the Fire.' He [Jibrīl] said, 'Say Amen,' so I said Amen. He said, 'May Allah make remote the one who has both of his parents or one of them attain old age yet is not kind towards them and dies and as a consequence enters the Fire.' He said, 'Say Amen,' so I said Amen. Then he said, 'And may Allah make remote the one in front of whom you are mentioned yet does not send prayers upon you, and who then dies and enters the Fire.' He said, 'Say Amen,' so I said Amen."

Ibn Ṣa'd al-Tilmisānī said in his book *Maḡāzib al-Islām*:

If it be asked why the one who abandons the sending of prayers upon him ﷺ shares the same punishment as the one who neglects the rights of the month of Ramaḡān and the one who is not kind to his parents, namely that of destruction and similar meanings such remoteness and humiliation, the answer is as follows: The punishment for all three is uniform because the offense is one, as all three have neglected one thing, namely the glorification of

Allah, the Blessed and Most High. To explain this further, the month of Ramaḡān is the month of Allah "in which was revealed the *Qurān*, a guidance for the people." So whoever exalts it and observes its rights out of faith and hope of reward, he has glorified Allah and is selected for the disjunction of forgiveness.

Now, the letter *fā* in his statement ﷺ "And yet is not forgiven [*fa lam yuḡfir lahu*]" is to indicate that it is far-fetched: that is, it is far fetched for the one possessed of intelligence and faith to find a path of glorifying Him, only to go against it by transgressing against its sanctities and neglecting its rights. If he does that and fails to carry out his obligation he deserves remoteness, humiliation, and lowness from Allah.

Likewise with dutifulness toward parents: dutifulness toward them is to extol and respect them, which entails the glorification and magnification of Allah, the Exalted, since Allah connected dutifulness toward them with His Oneness and worship. He said, "And your Lord decreed that you worship none but Him and that you are dutiful toward your parents." So the meaning of the letter *fā* in his statement, "And yet does not enter Paradise on account of them" is also to indicate that it is far-fetched. In other words, it is far fetched for people who are dutiful toward their parents to *not* be dutiful towards them—especially when their parents have attained old age and especially when it is obligatory to observe their rights and go to great pains in honoring them. If one is denied this, say by disrespecting them or belittling their rights, he will be from the people of sinful offenses, and thus deserve to be made remote and debarred of all goodness.

As for "sending prayers upon the Prophet" ﷺ, it is an

expression that denotes seeking his extolment and exaltation from Allah, which is, in reality, an exaltation of Allah. Allah said, "*Whoever obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah.*" So whoever exalts the Messenger of Allah ﷺ by sending prayers upon him when he is mentioned and displays pious veneration of him and elevates his rank, he will deserve exaltation and a lofty rank from Allah. And whoever belittles the resplendent virtue, luminance, and blessings of sending prayers upon him ﷺ when he is mentioned—that Allah clarified and guided him to—deserves expulsion, humiliation, and belittlement, and it is fitting that he be punished by being made remote and fearful if he does not send prayers upon him ﷺ. In his statement, "yet does not send prayers upon [you]," the letter *fā* is also to indicate that it is far-fetched. In other words, it is far-fetched for the one possessed of faith and who is able to articulate a few words on his tongue that will earn him ten prayers from Allah (and sufficient is that as a benefit, not to mention the increase in levels) that he intentionally neglects it, thereby losing out on abundant goodness and deserving, as a consequence, humiliation, Divine anger, and remoteness.

Thus, to remedy the coarseness we suffer from in the present day we present to you this commentary on the most frequently mentioned prayer upon the Prophet ﷺ, in hopes that by learning its intricate meanings, both the open and hidden, and its spiritual secrets, and by contemplating upon them inside and outside our prayers, we will grow closer to him, open ourselves to the outpouring of his generosity, and be granted the divine grace of gathering under his Standard of Praise on the Day of Judgment.



Commentary on the Abrahamic Prayer

O ALLAH! Send prayers upon [our master] Muhammad, the Unlettered Prophet, and upon the Family of [our master] Muhammad, just as You have sent prayers upon [our master] Ibrahim, and upon the Family of [our master] Ibrahim in the worlds. Indeed, You are worthy of all praise, the Glorious. O Allah! Bless [our master] Muhammad, the Unlettered Prophet, and the Family of [our master] Muhammad, just as You have blessed [our master] Ibrahim, and the Family of [our master] Ibrahim in the worlds. Indeed, You are worthy of all praise, the Glorious.

Allāhumma salli 'alā [Sayyidina] Muhammad al-Nabī al-Ummī wa 'alā Aḥi [Sayyidina] Muhammad kamā sallayta 'alā [Sayyidina] Ibrahim wa 'alā Aḥi [Sayyidina] Ibrahim fī 'alamīna innaka Hamīdun Majīd
Allāhumma bārik 'alā [Sayyidina] Muhammad al-Nabī al-Ummī wa 'alā Aḥi [Sayyidina] Muhammad kamā bārakta 'alā [Sayyidina] Ibrahim wa 'alā Aḥi [Sayyidina] Ibrahim fī 'alamīna innaka Hamīdun Majīd

The Meaning of the Phrase *Allāhuma*

THE PHRASE *Allāhuma* is used frequently in invocations. It means "O Allah [*yā Allāh*]." The letter *mīm* replaces the vocative particle [*yā*], so one should not say, for instance, "O Allah, the Oft Forgiving, the Merciful [*Allāhuma al-Ghafūr al-Rahīm*]," but should instead say, "O Allah, forgive me and have mercy upon me [*Allāhuma ighfir-lī war-rahimī*]." This phrase does not use the vocative particle [*yā*] save on rare occasions.

The Name [Allah] has many unique qualities: its *hamza* is severed when one is invoking with it, it is obligatory to enunciate its letter *lām* with velarization [*taḡhīm*], and the vocative particle enters it along with the definite article.¹

It is reported that al-Hasan al-Basrī said that all supplications are subsumed under the phrase *Allāhuma*. Al-Nādr b. Shumayl said, "Whoever says *Allāhuma* has invoked Allah with all of His Names." And Abū al-Rajāʾ al-'Aḡaridī has said that the letter *mīm* in *Allāhuma* contains ninety-nine of Allah's Names.

¹ When calling someone or something, the definite article (the al-) is normally omitted. —Tr

The Meaning of Ṣalāt

Al-Rāghib [al-Asfahānī] said, "Linguistically, the word *ṣalāt* means supplication and invocation for blessings and honor. When coming from Allah it means purification; when coming from the angels it means the seeking of forgiveness; and when coming from humans it means supplication."

Al-Māwardī said:

[*Ṣalāt*] is a homonym that subsumes several meanings under it. According to the clearest views on the issue, the word *ṣalāt* means mercy from Allah when coming from Him, and when coming from the angels it means the seeking of forgiveness, and when coming from the believers it means supplication.

Al-Zamakhsharī said, "It means mercy and benevolence; an example of this is found in the statement, '*Salla Allāhu 'alayk* [May Allah send prayers upon you], i.e., may He treat you mercifully and act benevolently toward you."

Al-Hāfiẓ al-Sakhāwī said:

The most correct position was Abū 'Alīya's mentioned earlier, who said that Allah's *ṣalāt* upon His Prophet ﷺ means His praise and exaltation of him, and that the angels' *ṣalāt* is their invocation asking Allah to confer that [upon the Prophet ﷺ]. What is meant by asking here is their asking for increase, not the very *ṣalāt* itself.

Qāḍī 'Iyād cited from Abū Bakr al-Qushayrī who said, "Allah's *ṣalāt* upon the Prophet is an embellishment and increase in honor, and the *ṣalāt* upon others who are of lesser status than the Prophet [ﷺ] is an invocation for mercy." This illustrates the difference between the Prophet ﷺ and the rest of the believers, for the Most High says, "*Indeed, Allah and His angels send prayers upon the Prophet*", but just before that in the same chapter Allah says, "*It is He and His angels who send prayers upon you...*" and it is well known that the share that the Prophet merits is far loftier than what is merited by others. Al-Halīmī said in [his commentary on] *Shu'ab al-īmān*:

The invocation of *ṣalāt* that is expressed by the tongue is an exaltation. The conventional prayer that we know of [i.e., the ritual prayer comprised of statements and movements] is called *ṣalāt* because of the thoracic spine, which is the middle part of the back. Custom has it to be respectful when a younger person sees an elder and bows toward him. Thereafter the prayer's recitation was called *ṣalāt*, too.

The import is that the corpus of the rites of prayer, from its standing and sitting etc. are expressions of exaltation and magnification of the Lord. After that, people expanded the use of the word and included supplication [*du'ā*] among its meanings, since supplication entails exaltation of the invoked coupled with longing and dire need and the seeking of one's needs from Allah's largesse and beautiful gaze....

[...] Therefore, the phrase *al-ṣalāwat illāh* [all prayers are for Allah] refers to all of the formulae of remembrance that express exaltation of the invoked and testify to His supreme rank and lofty, exalted status—all such exaltations belong exclusively to Allah and He alone deserves them.

and they are befitting for none besides Him. So when we say "O Allah! Send prayers upon Muhammad [Allāhuma *salli alā Muḥammad!*]," we only mean to say: "O Allah! Exalt Muhammad in the physical world by elevating his mention, manifesting his religion, and preserving his sacred law, and exalt him in the Hereafter by granting him the intercession for his nation, and by magnifying his reward and recompense, displaying his virtue over the first and the last with the Praiseworthy Station [*al-Maqām al-Nahmāʾil*], and by giving him preference to all the witnesses brought nigh."

... Although Allah Most High has decreed these things for the Prophet ﷺ, still there is for each of them multiple levels and ranks; hence when someone from his nation sends prayers upon him, asking Allah to increase him—and that person's supplication is answered—it is possible that the Prophet ﷺ is increased by that supplication in everything that we call a "level" or a "rank." It is for this reason that one of the intentions behind sending prayers upon the Prophet ﷺ is to fulfill his right and seek nearness to Allah, the Exalted and Sublime, by carrying it out. This proves that the meaning of our supplication "O Allah! Send prayers upon Muhammad—a prayer from You to him [*Allāhuma salli alā Muḥammad, salātan minka tayyib!*]" is that we do not possess the ability to send forth to the Prophet ﷺ anything that will further exalt his rank and elevate his august station. All of that is in Allah's Hand, so it is fitting to say that our *salāt* upon him is a supplication for him whereby we implore Allah Most Exalted and ask Him to grant that to the Prophet....

[...] There is another possible meaning for *salāt* upon the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: that it is similar to the supplication "Salutations upon the Messenger of Allah [*al-salam 'alā*

Rasūlillāh]" or "Salutations upon So-and-so [*al-salam alā fulān*]," for Allah, the Exalted and Sublime, said, "(Upon them are prayers from their Lord and mercy..." [Qur'an 2:157]. Essentially, this means: "Let there be *salāt* upon the Messenger of Allah ﷺ," just as it is said, "May Allah send prayers upon him [*sallā Allāhu alayhi*]"—that is, may there be prayers from Allah sent upon him. The takeaway here is that requesting from Allah is a form of invocation. Do you not see how the statement, "May Allah forgive you and have mercy upon you," stands in the place of saying "O Allah! Have mercy upon him [*Allāhuma arḥamhu*]?" And Allah knows best.

After citing this quote, al-Hāfiẓ al-Sakhāwī commented on al-Hālimī's view that *salāt* upon the Prophet ﷺ is exaltation of him:

Our Sheikh [i.e., al-Hāfiẓ Ibn Hajar] said, "There is no harm in adding the Prophet's family and his wives and offspring to the prayer, for it is not inconceivable that prayers be sent upon them whereby it is asked that they be exalted, for each person's exaltation is commensurate with what befits his or her rank. That said, the aforementioned quote from Abū 'Alīya is clearer in meaning, for with his explanation, the word *salāt* can be used with a single meaning with respect to Allah, His angels, and the believers who are ordered with it."

NOTICE

Although *salāt* takes the meaning of mercy, the scholars have differed over whether it is permissible to supplicate by asking Allah to have mercy upon the Prophet ﷺ. Imam al-Nawawī stated in his commentary upon *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*:

Qāḍī Iwād said, "There is no mention of mercy upon the Prophet ﷺ in any of these hadith reports, although it is found in certain rare reports [*gharīb*]..." Our teachers differ regarding the permissibility of supplicating for mercy upon the Prophet ﷺ. Some of them took the view—it being the preferred position of Abū Umar Ibn 'Abd al-Barr—that [the word] should not be said, while others allowed it, which is the position of Abū Muhammad b. Abī Zayd. The proof upheld by the majority of scholars is the fact that the Prophet ﷺ taught the prayer that is sent upon him, and it does not contain any mention of mercy. Thus the preferred view is that [the word] mercy should not be mentioned.

Ibn Hajar stated in *al-Durr al-mandūb*:

Know that Ibn 'Abd al-Barr took the position that it is prohibited to supplicate asking mercy for the Prophet ﷺ; however, other scholars refuted him on account of it being mentioned in several rigorously authentic hadith, the most authentic of them being the hadith of the *tashahhud* wherein it is said, "Salutations upon you, O Prophet, and the mercy of Allah..." There is also the hadith of the Bedouin who said, "O Allah! Have mercy upon me and upon Muhammad!"—whom the Prophet ﷺ tacitly approved. In addition there is the hadith, "O Allah! I ask You of mercy from You. O Allah, I hope for Your mercy. O Living, O Self-Subsistent, in Your mercy I seek aid." In his opening to his Epistle [*al-Risālah*], Imam al-Shāfi'ī wrote, "May Allah send prayers and salutations upon him, and may He have mercy upon him and ennoble him..."

Of course, with regard to the Prophet's words ﷺ—such as the hadith about the *tashahhud*—it is said that the

permissibility [of using the word mercy] is conditioned upon it being added to the words "salāt" and "salutation," and that without these two words it is impermissible. This position was adopted by a large group of scholars. In fact, in his *Ḥimāh* [*al-mu'lim*], Qāḍī Iwād cites it as the view of the majority of scholars. Al-Qurrubī said, "And this is the correct view."

On an individual level, certain scholars, such as al-Ghazālī, argued that it is impermissible to use the word "mercy." Al-Ghazālī stated, "It is impermissible to invoke mercy [upon him ﷺ]—that is, independently [without invoking *salāt* and salutations along with it]. This is evinced by the words of the Exalted, "Do not make your calling out to the Messenger like your calling out to one another." [Quran 24:63]. So although the meaning of *salāt* is mercy, the Prophet ﷺ is like the other Prophets in that he and they were given mercy as an exaltation of their rank and a means of discerning their lofty status above all others—may Allah send prayers and salutations upon them all."

So with regard to the Prophets, the word mercy does not mean the same as it does when applied unconditionally. The meaning of mercy when applied to them is more specific than that. Now, the apparent meaning of the Bedouin's statement "O Allah! Have mercy upon me and upon Muhammad! [*Allāhumma arḥamni wa Muḥammadi*]" and the Prophet's tacit approval indicate that it is permissible to use the word mercy even if it is not conjoined with *salāt* and salutations—this is what it shows. The Prophet's tacit approval is specific [*Ḥukūsh*], so it is given precedence over the general import of the verse. Furthermore, the stated opinion of those who regard it impermissible should be understood to mean a negation of permissibility that stands

equal to its converse in the balance, which is to say that its [ruling] is either offensive [*maktūb*] or against what is best [*khilāf al-awḥā*].

The only reason why mercy was invoked for the Prophet ﷺ—even though he is its quintessential embodiment [*aynūhā*]: “*And We have not sent you but as a mercy to the worldy*”¹⁰—is because his being a mercy for the worlds was from Allah’s mercy toward him ﷺ. And Allah has many other forms of mercy for him ﷺ, so when mercy is invoked for him what is being sought is for him to obtain their like.

In the margins of *al-Durr al-mandūd* I read the following:

Our Sheikh, the author—may Allah have mercy upon him—said in *Sharḥ al-ubāḥ*: “Al-Zarkashī said in *al-Khādim* that ‘Ibn Abd al-Barr, Abū al-Qāsim al-Anṣārī (the commentator upon *al-Ishād*), and Qāḍī Iyād all cited from the scholarly majority the position that it is impermissible to invoke mercy upon the Prophet ﷺ in an unrestricted and solitary manner. However, they are rebutted by al-Bukhārī’s report in his rigorously authentic collection wherein the Bedouin said, “O Allah! Have mercy upon me and upon Muhammad, and do not have mercy upon anyone else besides us!” The Prophet ﷺ said to him, “You have constricted what is vast,” but he did not censure him for using the word mercy in an unrestricted sense...”

Al-‘Azizī said in his commentary upon *al-fāmi’ al-soghīr*:

Al-‘Alqamī said, “Our Sheikh, Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, said, ‘It is impermissible, when someone mentions the Prophet ﷺ, to

say “May Allah have mercy upon him,” because the Prophet ﷺ said, “Whoever sends prayers upon me...” and did not say, “Whoever invokes mercy upon me...” or, “Whoever prays for me...” So although the word *ṣalāt* means mercy, the Prophet—out of exaltation—has been specially favored with this word, and as such no one should use another word in its place. This is supported by the words of the Most High: “*Do not make your calling out to the Messenger like your calling out to one another.*”” [Quran 24:63]

Abū al-Qāsim al-Anṣārī, the commentator on *al-Ishād*, stated, “It is permissible [to use the word mercy] when it is accompanied by the word *ṣalāt* but it is not allowed when used alone.” In *al-Ithāhān*, one of the books of Hanafī jurisprudence, it is related that Muhammad [al-Shaybānī] detested using the word since it gives the impression of imperfection. That is because mercy is usually reserved for the one who does something blameworthy.

As for the hadith of the Bedouin found in the collection of al-Bukhārī and Muslim where he said “O Allah! Have mercy upon me and upon Muhammad,” it could be said in response that it was said as a continuation of what was said before it, for it states in the hadith reported by Abū Dāwūd that the Prophet ﷺ used to say between each prostration, “O Allah, forgive me and have mercy upon me.”

Our Sheikh said, “This doesn’t refute Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, for he prohibited invoking mercy and forgiveness for the Prophet ﷺ, and the context of this hadith is that of legislation and instructing the *Umma* how to invoke when they are in that position in the prayer.” In addition, this hadith illustrates the Prophet’s utter humility before his Lord. When it comes to us, however, we are only to supplicate for him using the word *ṣalāt*—which is what he

ordered us to use since it expresses veneration, reverence and exaltation that befits his noble station. Those from our colleagues who agreed with Ibn Abd al-Barr include Abū Bakr Ibn al-Arabi and al-Saydalānī. This was transmitted by al-Rāfiʿī, and al-Nawawī concurred with him in *al-Adhkār*.

-3-

The Meaning and Etymology of the Name Muḥammad

Ibn al-Qayyim said:

This name is the most famous of the Prophet's names. It originates from the word *ḥamd* [praise], which entails lauding and loving the beloved, and exalting and revering him. This is the reality of praise. The name Muḥammad has the morphological pattern of *muḥaʿal*, like the words *muʿazzam* [revered], *muḥabbab* [beloved], *muwaddad* [object of affection], *muḥajjal* [honored], and the like. That is because this morphological pattern is used to denote abundance [*takhrīr*]; so if an active participle is derived from this form, it means one who does a specific action time and time again, such as a *muʿallim* [teacher], *muḥaḥim* [tutor], *muḥayyin* [explainer], *muḥallil* [deliverer], *muḥarrir* [merry maker], etc. On the other hand, if a passive participle is derived from this form it means one who is a frequent object of that action time and time again, or, in this case, one who deserves to be praised time and time again. It is said, "He was praised abundantly, hence he is oft-praised

² That is, the noun-object for the verb in the third form of *jaʿala/yuʿal* the/tafīlan. —T

[*Muhammad*],” just as it is said, “He was taught frequently, hence he is well taught [*imni allam*].”

In connection to the Prophet ﷺ, the name Muhammad is both a quality and a proper noun. (Although with regards to many people named Muhammad it is only a proper noun.) The same may be said regarding the names of the Lord Most High, the names of His Book, and the names of His Prophet ﷺ—they are proper nouns that point to qualitative meanings, and there is no contradiction between the names as designated, proper nouns, and the names as qualities, but the same can not be said regarding other names used for the creation.

Certainly, Allah is the Creator, the Maker, the Fashioner, and the All-Forgiving; these are all names that point to qualitative meanings, and they are His attributes. The same is said about the Qur'an. It is called the Criterion, the Clear Book, and other names. And likewise with the names of the Prophet ﷺ: Muhammad, Ahmad, al-Māhī [literally, “the one who obliterates disbelief”], etc. In the hadith of [Jabir b. Mut'am it is reported that the Prophet ﷺ said, “Indeed, I have several names. I am Muhammad, I am Ahmad, and I am al-Māhī by whom Allah obliterates disbelief....” The Prophet ﷺ mentioned these names to recount Allah's favor upon him and pointed to their meanings. If the Prophet's names were only proper nouns bereft of meanings they would not indicate praise. This is why Hassān b. Thābit ﷺ said:

He portioned out to him from His name, in order that he be exalted

For He is the Possessor of the Throne, the one who is Praised
And this is Muhammad [the Oft-Praised]

This being established, we say that this is the Prophet's name ﷺ since it points to his reality, which is praise. He is praised in the sight of Allah, praised in the sight of the angels, praised in the sight of his brethren among the Messengers, and praised in the sight of all of the inhabitants of the earth. And even if some of humanity have disbelieved in him, still the qualities of perfection contained within the Prophet ﷺ are praiseworthy according to every intelligent person, even if that person denies this from contempt or obstinacy, or refuses it out of ignorance of the fact that they were truly the Prophet's traits. Had such a person known that the Prophet ﷺ was qualified with these traits he would have undoubtedly praised him, for he would praise a person adorned with these traits; but he is unaware that the Prophet ﷺ has these traits, so in essence he praises the Prophet ﷺ while unbeknownst to him.

The unique elements designated in the term “praise” have been vouchsafed with the Prophet ﷺ like no other, for he is Muhammad and Ahmad, and his nation is called “Those given to frequent praise,” [*Hamamūn*] as they praise Allah frequently during times of hardship and ease. The prayers of his nation are initiated with praise; his addresses begin with praise; and his Book starts with praise, as does the Preserved Tablet [*al-Lauh al-Mahfūz*] that is with Allah. The Prophet's successors and his Companions transcribed the text of the Qur'an with openings of praise; on the Day of Resurrection the Standard of Praise [*Uraq' al-Hamd*] shall be in the Prophet's hand; and when the Prophet ﷺ prostrates before his Lord to gain the Intercession and permission is granted to him, he will praise his Lord with praises that Allah shall inspire him with. The Prophet ﷺ is the possessor of the Praiseworthy Station over which the first and the last

shall be jealous—and Allah Most High says, “*And perform the night vigil for a part of the night as a supererogatory act for you, as perhaps Allah shall grant you a Praiseworthy Station.*” [Quran 17:79] After the Prophet ﷺ arises from that station he will be praised by all of the people on the Judgment Plain: the Muslims and disbelievers among them, and the first and last of them. The Prophet is praiseworthy [Mahmūd] on account of the guidance, faith, and beneficial knowledge and righteous action with which he has filled the earth.

By the Prophet ﷺ hearts have been opened and darkness has been cast out from the earth. The Prophet ﷺ delivered his followers from the bondage of Satan, and freed them from the association of partners with Allah, and rescued them from disbelief and ignorance of Him, enabling them to attain through him sanctification in this life and the Next.

Indeed, the Prophet’s message came at a time in which humanity needed it most. Some were worshippers of idols, some worshippers of the cross, and others worshippers of fire or celestial bodies. Anger and Allah’s wrath were upon them. They were in a state of utter bewilderment. They knew not a Lord to worship or even how to worship; they vied violently with one another. Whosoever deemed something good would invite others to it and fight those who disagreed with him. At the time there was not a single foothold illumined by the light of the divine message; and Allah, the Glorified and Exalted, looked upon the inhabitants of the earth and detested them all. Arabs and non-Arabs alike, save the isolated remnants of those who followed the correct religion.

Allah granted succor to the lands and the servants by sending the Prophet ﷺ. Through means of him Allah

banished darkness and quickened creation after its death. Through the Prophet ﷺ Allah led humanity out of misguidance, taught them after their ignorance, increased them after their want, honored them after their humiliation, and enriched them after their poverty. By means of the Prophet ﷺ Allah opened eyes that were blind, ears that were deaf, and hearts that were shut. He acquainted the people with their Lord and object of worship with as much gnosis as their strengths could bear. The Prophet initiated, repeated, summarized, and detailed Allah’s names, attributes, and actions until the gnosis of Allah manifested in the hearts of His believing servants, and the clouds of doubt and misgivings scattered from their hearts just as the clouds scatter from the full moon during the night. He did not leave untaught for his nation any aspect of his teaching, not to those before him or after him; nay, he suffered them and healed them, and made them free of needing anyone else who may speak on this matter: “*Is it not enough for them that We have revealed unto you the Book that is recited to them? Indeed, in that there is a mercy and reminder for a believing folk.*” [Quran 29:51]

Abū Dāwūd related in his *Marāṣil* collections that the Prophet ﷺ once saw a parchment of the Torah in the hand of one of his Companions. He said ﷺ, “It is enough misguidance for a people to follow a book other than their own which has been revealed to their Prophet.” Confirming this, Allah then revealed the verse, “*Is it not enough for them that We have revealed unto you the Book that is recited to them? Indeed, in that there is a mercy and reminder for a believing folk.*” The Prophet ﷺ, therefore, acquainted them with the path that would cause them to arrive unto their Lord and His good-pleasure and His Abode of Honor; he left not a single

good thing save that he ordered them to do it, and he left not a single evil thing save that he forbade them from it—as he ﷺ said, “I have not left anything that will draw you closer to Paradise save that I ordered you to do it, and I have not left anything that would draw you closer to the Fire save that I forbade you from it.” Abū Dharr رضي الله عنه said, “We do not see a bird flying in the sky after the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has left us save that we have some knowledge of it that we gained from him.”

Certainly, the Prophet ﷺ informed them in the best of ways concerning their condition when they would return to their Lord. He disclosed the matter and made things clear. He left not a single door of beneficial knowledge that will profit servants and bring them close to their Lord save that he opened it, and he left not a single problem save that he explained it and made it clear, in order that Allah may guide hearts away from their error and heal them—through him!—of their maladies and deliver them from their own ignorance. So what man is more deserving of the name Muhammad than him? May Allah grant him the best reward on behalf of his *Ummah*!

The most correct view regarding the verse “*And We have not sent you save as a mercy to the Worlds*” is that it is taken upon its general wording. By that estimation it may be said to contain two angles. Regarding the first angle, it may be said that the “worlds” in general received benefit through his messengership. As for his followers, they obtained through him nobility in this life and the Next, and as for his enemies and those who fought against him, their swift killing and deaths were better for them than remaining alive, for their lives [if lengthened] would have led to an increase in the intensity of torment meted out to them in the Hereafter.

It was decreed that their lot be wretchedness, so their swift death was better for them than living a long life in a state of disbelief.

As for the disbelievers with whom the Prophet ﷺ had a covenant of protection [*al-amn aḥdathī*], they lived in this world under his shade, covenant, and protection, and due to their covenant they were lesser in evil than those who waged war against the Prophet ﷺ. As for the hypocrites, it was such that their blood, wealth, and families were respected and made sacrosanct, and because they openly displayed faith in the Prophet ﷺ, they enjoyed the legal rulings of Muslims, such as inheritance and the like. As for the other nations of the earth, Allah lifted with the Prophet’s message the general punishment that had afflicted them, so the entire world attained benefit from the Prophet’s message ﷺ.

Regarding the second angle, it is said that the Prophet ﷺ was a mercy to all, but the believers accepted this mercy and benefited from it in this life and the Next, and the disbelievers rejected it. So while he was still a mercy to them, the disbelievers did not accept it—much like when it is said that a particular medicine is useful for a particular ailment but the patient fails to take it, yet it is still useful for the sickness as such.

Of the many things for which the Prophet ﷺ merits praise are his noble qualities of character and sanctified demeanor that Allah made an element of his natural disposition. Anyone who ponders carefully upon the Prophet’s character traits and demeanor will know that they are the most superior of all character traits. The Prophet ﷺ was without doubt the most knowledgeable of creation, the greatest of them in keeping trusts, the most truthful

of them in speech, and their most clement, generous, and magnanimous. He was the most patient of creation and their most pardoning and forgiving. When the Prophet ﷺ was faced with boorish ignorance from others it only increased him in forbearance—as al-Bukhārī related in his rigorously authentic collection from ‘Abdullāh b. Amr ﷺ. When describing the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, Amr said, “He is described in the Torah as Muhammad, ‘My servant and Messenger. I have named him al-Mutawakkil [the Trustworthy]. He is neither coarse nor harsh, nor loud in the markets. He does not respond to a wrong action with a wrong action in like; rather, he pardons and forgives. I will not take him until He has made the crooked community straight, and by him I open blind eyes, deaf ears, and covered hearts until they say “There is no god but Allah.””

The Prophet ﷺ was the most merciful and kindest of creation, and the source of most benefit for humanity in their worldly and Afterworldly concerns. He was the best and most eloquent of creation in articulation, expressing profound meanings with concise words that conveyed his intent. He was the most patient of people in the areas that call for patience, and the most truthful of them in speech. He was the most vigilant of them in keeping promises and trusts and the greatest in requiting good with much more than he was given.

He was the humblest and most altruistic of men. He was the keenest of men to defend, protect, and look after his Companions. He was the most upright of creation in fulfilling the obligations upon him and abstaining from the prohibitions. He was the most dutiful of creation in maintaining ties of kinship.

‘Alī ﷺ said, “The breast of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was

the most generous of breasts, and he was the most truthful of men in speech. He was the gentlest of people in nature and the kindest of them in companionship. Whoever saw him unexpectedly would be awe-stricken, and whoever got to know him would love him. Whoever described him would say, ‘I saw neither before him nor after him anyone like him.”

Saying that the “breast of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was the most generous of breasts,” ‘Alī meant the goodness of the Prophet’s heart and his abundant munificence, as if to say that goodness sprung forth from him ﷺ and he was predisposed to every beautiful character trait and every act of goodness. Some scholars say there is no locus in the entire world that contains as much goodness as the chest of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ gathered within him every form of good and they were all deposited within his breast.

As for the Prophet ﷺ being “the most truthful of men in speech,” such was conceded even by his enemies who fought against him. Not a single one among them ever encountered a lie from the Prophet ﷺ, so what say you about the testimony of his allies?

All sorts of people, pagans and People of the Scripture alike, fought against the Prophet ﷺ using a variety of means, yet never did a single one of them accuse him of a single lie, small or large. Al-Maswar b. Makhrama said, “I said to Abū Jahl (who was my maternal uncle), ‘O Uncle! Did you all ever accuse the Prophet of telling a lie before he proclaimed his message?’ My uncle replied, ‘Dear nephew! I swear, when he was a young man we used to call Muhammad the Trustworthy [al-‘Amin], and when he got older he was not known to have ever lied.’ I said, ‘O Uncle!

Why then don't you follow him?" He replied, "Dear nephew, There is a competition for nobility between us and Banū Hāshim. They fed people [making the pilgrims] and so we followed in suit, they provided drink [to the pilgrims] and we followed suit, and they provided shelter and so we too followed suit, and just as soon as we were catching up to them they proclaimed, "There is a Prophet in our midst!"

Allah consoled the Prophet ﷺ and made light of what his enemies said: "We know that you are grieved by what they say. And indeed, they do not hate you, but it is the verses of Allah that the wrongdoers deny. Certainly there were Messengers denied before you and they were patient with the denial and harm they received until Our victory came. There is no altering the words of Allah. There have certainly come to you some of the reports of the previous Messengers." [Qur'an 6:33-35].

Alī's statement that "He was the gentlest of people" means that the Prophet ﷺ was affable, easy going, and close to people. He would respond to the invitation of those who invited him, he would fulfill the needs of those who sought his help, and he would comfort the hearts of those who came to him. He never denied them, shunned them, or disappointed them in any way. When his Companions would want something from him he would consent and follow them in it, and when he was resolute in carrying something out he never acted in a unilateral fashion, but rather he would seek his Companions' counsel and consult with them in the matter. He would accept from the good doers among them and pardon the wrongdoers among them.

His statement that he ﷺ was "the kindest of them in companionship" means the Prophet ﷺ never kept anyone's company save that it was in the best manner, and in a most

beautiful and noble way. Never did he scowl his face or speak coarsely; he was always smiling with his company and never held against them their crude outbursts or boorish behavior. He would deal kindly with his companions and bear patiently with their crudeness. His bore their inadvertent annoyances and boorishness. He never rebuked them or found fault with them or did anything to offend them. Those who kept the Prophet's company ﷺ would say, "I am the most beloved of people to him!" and that is because they saw firsthand his subtle kindness and closeness, and would experience his attention and concern through his instructions, sincere counsel, excellent treatment, and patience with their offenses. What companionship is or was nobler than this?

Al-Ḥusayn ﷺ said, "I asked my father about the Prophet's behavior with those who kept his company and he said, 'The Prophet ﷺ was always smiling. He was of affable disposition, gentle. He was neither harsh nor coarse, nor boisterous or foul mouthed. He was not given to excessive criticism or praise. Whenever there was something he did not like he would pretend not to notice it. He would never dishearten or disappoint a person who asked something of him. He forwent three things for himself: he would never criticize, find fault with, or otherwise expose anyone. He would only speak when he hoped for reward in it, and when he would speak, his Companions would lower their heads attentively, as if birds were perched atop their heads. When he would fall silent his Companions would not hastily resume their conversations and instead would wait. Whenever someone would speak in his presence they would remain attentively silent until he was finished speaking. He would engage them in conversation. He would laugh at the

same things that made them laugh, and marvel at the same things they marveled at. He would bear patiently the crude speech or unabashed request of the stranger, although the Companions would rebuke the person. He would say to them, "If you see someone in need making requests, bring him to me." He never accepted the praise of anyone unless it was someone who was requiring him for something. He would never interrupt anyone's speech; he would wait until someone was done speaking, after which he would either forbid that person or stand up and leave."¹

Alī's statement that "[w]hoever saw him unexpectedly would be awe-stricken, and whoever got to know him would love him" describes the Prophet ﷺ with two unique qualities that Allah confers on the people of truthfulness and sincerity: dignity and love.

The Prophet ﷺ was granted awe-inspiring dignity and love. Whoever would see the Prophet ﷺ would be filled with awe and would honor him, and his heart would brim with reverence and esteem—even if he was an enemy. And when someone would spend time with the Prophet ﷺ and get to know him he would become, in his estimation, the most beloved of the creation.

In sum, the Prophet ﷺ is the revered, the exalted, the beloved, the ennobled. This is complete and perfect love when conjoined with reverence and awe; for love without reverence and awe is deficient, and reverence and awe without love—as one might have in the presence of an oppressor who wields power—is imperfect as well. Perfection occurs when love and affection are conjoined with reverence and esteem; but such a combination is not to be found unless the beloved possess qualities of perfection that merit reverence and love.

Because Allah (the Exalted and Glorified!) is more deserving of that than anyone else, He deserves to be exalted, magnified, held in awe, loved, and revered by every fiber of one's being. And nothing else should be a co-sharer in this, for that is the polytheism Allah does not forgive, since such a person is guilty of equating between Allah and His creation in the act of love, but Allah says: "*And among the people are those who take equals along with Allah, loving them like the love of Allah; but those who believe are firmer in [their] love for Allah.*" [Quran 2:165]

In this verse, Allah informs us that whoever loves something besides Allah like his love for Allah has indeed taken that object as a rival. And the denizens of the Hellfire shall say to their objects of worship in the Fire: "*By Allah, we were certainly in manifest error, when we equated you with the Lord of the Worlds.*" [Quran 26:97]

Now, this parallel they drew between Allah and their objects of worship was not in the belief that their objects had created the heavens or the earth, or had created them or their forefathers; rather, they had only taken them as equals to the Lord of the Worlds in their love for them as Allah is to be loved. That is because the reality of worship [*ibādah*] is love and submissive humility, which is the magnification and honor that Allah has described Himself with in His statement: "*Blessed is the Name of Your Lord, the Possessor of Majesty and Reverence* [Dhū al-Jalāl wa al-Ikrām]." [Quran 55:78]

The most correct of the two views concerning the meaning [of this name] is that *Jalāl* is magnification and *Ikram* is love; this is the secret behind the servant's saying "There is no god but Allah, Allah is the Greatest [*lā ilāha illā Allah wa Allāh Akbar*]." In this connection, there is

mentioned in the *Musnad* of Imam Ahmad a report from Anas رضي الله عنه who related that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said, "Be constant and fervent in your mention of 'O Possessor of Majesty and Reverence [*yā Dhā al-Jalāl wa al-Ikram*]...' In the *Musnad* of Abū Yā lā al-Mawsilī there is found a report in which one of the Companions wanted to know Allah's Supreme Name, whereupon he saw a dream in which there was written among the stars of heaven: "O Originator of the Heavens and the Earth, O Possessor of Majesty and Reverence!"

Every form of love and magnification given to a human being is only permitted insofar as it is connected to [one's] love and magnification of Allah. An example here would be love for the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم, because love for him is elemental in having complete love and magnification of the One who sent him. The Prophet's *Ummia* love him on account of Allah's love for him, and they magnify him and revere him on account of Allah's magnification of him—so it is a love for the sake of Allah and one of the essential elements that lead to Allah's love. The same may be said with regard to love for and magnification of the scholars, the faithful, and the Companions رضي الله عنهم. They are loved because they are loved by Allah and His Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم.

The point here is to mention that Allah Most High conferred upon His Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم love and awe-inspiring dignity, and for certain, every sincere believer has a portion thereof. Al-Hasan al-Basīr (may Allah have mercy upon him) said, "The believer possesses a sweetness and awe-inspiring dignity," which is to say, the believer is loved and held in awe and esteem due to the raiment of faith that Allah has clothed him in.

Accordingly, no man has ever been so loved, held in such esteem, and so honored in the breasts of men than the

Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم was loved, esteemed, and honored in the breasts of his Companions. Before he had embraced Islam, Amr b. al-ʿAs said that there was no one he hated more than the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, yet when he embraced Islam there was no one more beloved or honorable in his eyes than him صلى الله عليه وسلم. He said, "If I wanted to describe him to you I would be unable, for my reverence for him was so great that my eye never got a fill of him صلى الله عليه وسلم!"

Urwā b. Masʿūd said to Quraysh, "O People! By Allah, I have been in delegations sent to the Crostres, the Caesar, and other kings, but I have never seen a king who is extolled by his courtiers like the companions of Muhammad [صلى الله عليه وسلم] extol him. By Allah, out of awe of him they never stare directly in his face; and he does not spit except that it falls in the hands of one of them, who then rubs his face and body with it. When he performs ablutions they almost fight to get his excess ablution water...."

Because the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم possesses traits that merit praise over and over again, he was named Muhammad [The Off-Praised]. This name is completely congruous with the one named by it and he صلى الله عليه وسلم is in absolute correspondence to its meaning.

The difference between the name Ahmad and Muhammad can be expressed in two different ways. In the first way, the name Muhammad means the one who is praised over and over again, and it indicates an abundance of those who praise him, which in turn necessitates that he possesses praiseworthy traits that merit such praise. On the other hand, Ahmad is a superlative noun that comes from the word praise [*hamd*], and it indicates that the praise he merits is far superior to the praise merited by others. The name Muhammad, therefore, indicates a *quantitative*

increase in his praises, and the name Ahmad indicates a *qualitative* increase in his praises—hence the Prophet ﷺ is praised more often and with better praise than all others who are praised.

In the second way, Muhammad is the one who is praised repeatedly (as we mentioned above) and Ahmad is the one whose praises of his Lord are superior to the praises of others. Accordingly, the first name, Muhammad, indicates the one who is praised, and the second name, Ahmad, indicates that he is the best of those who praise his Lord.

This [latter] view conforms to grammatical principles. According to the Basran grammatical school, superlative nouns [*tafīṭil*] and nouns of astonishment [*ta'ajjub*] are only derived from subject-doer nouns [*fā'il*] and not object nouns [*maf'ūl*]; however, others have contended with this position of theirs and said that rather, it is permitted to derive nouns of astonishment and superlative nouns from subject-doer nouns as well as object nouns. In any case, the point here is simply to mention that the Prophet ﷺ was named Muhammad and Ahmad because he praises more than others and is superior to others who are praised. The preferred position is that both names are object-nouns, as that is more eloquent in extolment of him and more complete in meaning. Had the intended meaning been that of a subject-doer noun he would be named al-Hammād [the one who is frequent in praise] just as he was named Muhammad [the one who is oft-praised], for indeed, he praised his Lord more than any of creation. And so if his name was a subject-doer noun it would have been more fitting to name him Hammād, just as his *Ummā* is named *al-Hammādan* [those given to abundant praise].

Moreover, his two names are but derived from his

praiseworthy characteristics and traits on account of which he merited the names Muhammad and Ahmad. He is, therefore, the one who is praised by the inhabitants of the world and the Hereafter, and praised by those of the celestial and terrestrial worlds. And on account of his multitude of praiseworthy features that escape the calculations of those who enumerate, he was given two names of praise that necessitate his superiority in rank and qualities...

Qāḍī 'Iyād said:

Allāh (the Exalted and Sublime!) prevented anyone from being called by these two names [Muhammad and Ahmad] before his time ﷺ, and no one had laid claim to this name before him, lest those who are weak of heart fall prey to doubts and confusion.

The same may be said with respect to the name Muhammad. None of the Arabs or anyone else was called that until it became known shortly before his birth that a prophet would be sent whose name shall be Muhammad, whereupon a few Arabs named their sons Muhammad in hopes that one of them would be him, but "Allah knows best where to put His message..." [Quran 6:124]

In his commentary upon his abridgment of *Sahīh al-Bukhārī*, the knower of Allāh, 'Abdullāh b. Abī Jamra, said about the hadīth, "Take my name but do not take my agnomen [i.e., Abū al-Qāsim]":

As for his permitting them to take his name—may prayers and salutations be upon him—it is because of the great goodness that has been reported concerning it, as it was narrated that there is no house in which there resides

someone named Muhammad save that the house will not be deprived of goodness. It is also mentioned that if, on the Day of Judgment, someone cries out to him using his name, saying "O Muhammad!" those who hear it and raise their head in acknowledgment will be blessed with triumph and felicity. There are several other narrations about his name that resemble this....

There was one blessed man I had encountered who had a portion of sacred knowledge. He had several children, and after hearing [beforehand] of the immense goodness contained in this name and the goodness granted to the one who names his son with it, the man named all of [his sons] Muhammad and only distinguished between them with agnomens. I have only seen him and his sons in a state of immense goodness, despite the fact that he never took a spiritual guide or went beyond his own personal religious concerns.

Speaking about the noble name Muhammad, the hadith master [Jaʿlāl al-Dīn] al-Suyūṭī mentioned in *al-Riyāḍ al-anʿiyya fī asmāʾ Khayr al-Khalaq*:

Allāh the Exalted said, "Muhammad is the Messenger of Allāh" [Qurʾān 48:29], "And Muhammad is but a Messenger" [Qurʾān 3:144], and "Muhammad is not the father of any man among you; rather, he is the Messenger of Allāh." [Qurʾān 33:40]. This was mentioned earlier along with the hadith reports.

This name [Muhammad] is the most famous and noblest of his names ³⁰, and accordingly, it has been favored with several unique features. These features include the essentiality of uttering his name, for when a disbeliever wishes to embrace Islam, his Islam is not deemed valid until

he articulates the Prophet's name by uttering, "Muhammad is the Messenger of Allāh." Uttering the name Ahmad in this case is not sufficient, although al-Halīmī allowed it provided that the one saying it also adds [the Prophet's agnomen] Abū al-Qāsim. Al-Halīmī's position was also supported by al-Isnawī in *al-Faḥḥīd*.

Another unique feature of this name is that it is incumbent to mention it in the final recitation of the prayer. While in that position of the prayer, none of his other names—not even Ahmad—shall suffice, as was mentioned in [Imam al-Nawawī's] *Shāḥ al-Muhaddḥab*, being also the verified position [in the Shāfiʿī school]. It is likewise incumbent to mention his name during the [Friday] sermon.

Moreover, it is detested [yukraḥ] to carry his name [on a ring] in the lavatory [openly], and it must be removed from the hand when washing after the call of nature. If the name Muhammad is engraved on the ring and the ring's owner intends by it himself [who is named Muhammad], there is some question as to whether or not the same ruling applies.

Another unique feature of the name Muhammad is that when its letters are disjoined and spelled out there comes the number of the Messengers who were 313 in total. That is because the name Muhammad has a letter *mīm* in the beginning and a second *mīm* that takes a double enunciation [*shadda*] which counts as two letters, and when the letter *mīm* is spelled out there is *m-i-m*, which counts as ninety since the letter *mīm* is forty and the letter *yāʾ* is ten [e.g., *mīm* (40) + *mīm* (40) + *yāʾ* (10) = 90]. Therefore, the three *mīms* [Muhammad] total 270 and the letter *dal* is thirty-five (since the *dis* four, the *ā* is one, and the *is* thirty). And the letter *h* is eight and is not disjoined—therefore the total number is 313.³¹

In addition, [Imam al-Suyūṭī] also cited a narration with his chain of transmission up to Ibn Abbās ۞ detailing the reason why the Prophet ۞ received the name Muhammad ۞. Ibn Abbās said, "When the Prophet ۞ was born, Abd al-Muṭṭalib held a banquet [*aqīqah*] on his behalf, slaughtered a sheep, and named him Muhammad. Someone asked him, 'O Abū al-Hārith! Why have you chosen that name and not the names of his forefathers?' Abd al-Muṭṭalib replied, 'I wanted Allah to praise him in the heavens and for the people to praise him upon the earth.'"

Al-Bayhaqī reported with his chain of transmission on the authority of Ibn Ishāq who said, "It is mentioned regarding Āmina b. Wāhib, the mother of the Prophet ۞, that someone came to her as she carried the Prophet Muhammad ۞ in her womb and said, 'You are carrying the master of this nation, so when he is born you must say, "I seek refuge for him in The One [al-Wāhid] from the evil of every envier [along with some couplets of poetry mentioned]," and name him Muhammad for in the Torah his name is Ahmad; he is praised by the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth; and in the Gospel his name is Ahmad; he is praised by the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth; and in the Qurān his name is Muhammad.' This is why Āmina named him Muhammad." Al-Kalā'ī stated in his biography of the Prophet ۞:

It is related that Abd al-Muṭṭalib named him Muhammad because of a dream he had. Some claim that in his dream Abd al-Muṭṭalib saw a silver chain coming from his back. One part extended, rising toward the heaven, one part was on the earth, and one part was in the east and one part was

³ To recap: $m(10) + yā'(10) + m(40) = 90 \times 3 = 270$; $d(4) + ā(1) + l(30) + h(8) = 43$; $270 + 43 = 313$.

in the west. Afterwards, this chain transformed into a tree and each leaf on the tree was a light and the people of the east and west were holding on to it. When Abd al-Muṭṭalib related this dream it was interpreted as a newborn child that would come from his progeny who would be followed by the people of the east and west, and whom the inhabitants of the celestial realm and the earth shall praise. This is why he was named Muhammad—in addition to what Āmina told him when she instructed him to give him that name.

The hadith master [Jalāl al-Dīn] al-Suyūṭī cited a narration with his chain of transmission up to Abū Hurayra ۞ who reported that the Prophet ۞ said on the night he was taken on the Heavenly Night Ascension: "There was not a single heavenly sphere I passed by save that I saw my name written: 'Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.'" This was reported by Abū Ya'la and al-Bazzār.

Al-Ṭabarānī related with his chain up to 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb ۞ who reported that the Messenger of Allah ۞ said, "When Ādam committed his slip he said, 'O my Lord! I ask that You forgive me by the right of Muhammad!' Allah said, 'O Ādam! How do you know about Muhammad?' Ādam replied, 'O my Lord! Blessed is Your Name! After You created me [with Your Hand and breathed into me of Your Spirit] I raised my head and saw written on the Throne *There is no God but Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah*, and I understood that You would not place next to Your Name any but the most exalted of Your creation in Your sight.' Allah said: 'O Ādam! He is the last of the Prophets to come from your progeny, and were it not for him I would not have created you!'"

This was recorded by al-Hākim in *al-Mustadrak* and declared rigorously authentic by al-Bayhaqī in *Daṭā'īl al-Nabuwat*. Abū

Nu'aym related in *al-Hilya* with his chain up to Ibn 'Abbās ؓ who reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "There is not to be found in Paradise a single leaf bearing tree except that there is written upon it: *There is no god but Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.*"

Al-Bazzār and others reported (in *maṭfū* form) from Abū Dharr: "The treasure mentioned by Allah in His Book is a golden tablet where it is written: 'In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful. I am astonished at the one who is certain of the divine decree yet fatigues himself; I am astonished at the one who mentions the Hellfire and then laughs; and I am astonished at the one who remembers death and forgets.' There is no god but Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah."¹⁰

Al-Suyūṭī also related with his chain to Jabir b. 'Abdullah ؓ who reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "The engraving upon the ring of Sulaymān son of Dāwūd was *There is no god but Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.*"

Al-Fabarānī related with his chain to 'Ubāda b. al-Sāmit ؓ who reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "The gemstone on the ring of Sulaymān son of Dāwūd was celestial. It was sent down to him, whereupon he set it in his ring. Its inscription read: *I am Allah. There is no god but Me. Muhammad is My Servant and My Messenger.*" Al-Suyūṭī remarked:

The soundest hadith reports that have been narrated about the virtue of taking the name [Muhammad] is the hadith of Abū 'Umayyā al-Bāhilī from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: "Whoever has a newborn and names him Muhammad out of love for me and with the intention of seeking the blessings of my name, both he and his newborn will be in Paradise." The chain of this narration is unproblematic [*ḥaḍīṯ ḥaṣṣa*].

Ibn Hajar al-Makkī said in his commentary upon the *Shamā'ih*:

One of their [i.e., the names Muhammad and Ahmad] salient features is that they both have the same number of letters as the Supreme Name [Allah]. And there are other benefits in these two noble names: Whoever writes them on a parchment and carries it on his person and starts intently at it while sending prayers upon the Prophet ﷺ, he will see many dreams of the Prophet ﷺ. My master, Sayyid Mustafā al-Bakrī, said at the end of his commentary upon the *ḥikay* of Imām al-Nawawī ؓ, "Muhammad is the most prominent of his names ﷺ and no one took it as a name before him. But when the time drew near for the appearance of his light and its mention was diffused and spread, fifteen or so People of the Scripture named their children Muhammad in hope of prophethood [appearing in their midst]. It is said that the Prophet ﷺ has one thousand names, and some say he has two thousand and twenty names, but the most delightful of them to the ears and the best of them in alleviating the burning of enrapturement is this noble name, even if it is true that all of his names ﷺ share in this immense station."

A similar sentiment was expressed by the commentator on *Dalā'il al-ḥajj* al-Fāṣī:

It is the most famous of his names ﷺ and the most unique of them and the one by which he is most widely recognized. Allah—the Blessed and Exalted!—addresses him by this name and gives it to him in this life and the Next. This name is specifically chosen in the phrase of Divine Unity

[i.e., being part of the phrase *La ilaha illa Allah Muhammad Rasul Allah*].

This name is used in Adam's agonies [i.e., Abū Muhammad]—prayers and salutations be upon him—and through it Adam sought intercession, and it was by sending prayers upon the one named with it that he paid the dowry of his wife Hawā'.

The name Muhammad is what the Prophet ﷺ called himself. He would say, "I am Muhammad son of 'Abdullāh," and "By the One in whose Hand rests the soul of Muhammad," and "[O] Fātima daughter of Muhammad!" and he would write [in his missives]: "From Muhammad the Messenger of Allah."

It is with the name Muhammad that the angels send prayers upon him. It is the name Prophet 'Isā ﷺ will mention in the Hereafter as he guides others unto him for the Intercession. Muhammad is the name by which Jibrīl ﷺ addressed him in the hadith on the ascension, and in other reports. In the same hadith on the ascension it is the name by which Ibrāhīm ﷺ addresses him ﷺ.

It is the name given to him by his grandfather 'Abd al-Mutalib when he was born. It is the name by which his people called him and the name by which the angel of the mountain addressed him.

With this name the Angel of Death called out, saying "O Muhammad!" as he rose to the heavens weeping after taking his blessed soul ﷺ. The name Muhammad is what he ﷺ shall call himself when speaking to the Gate Keeper of the Gardens, when he seeks entry and is granted it—and there are several other aspects related to this name, but their mention escapes me at the moment.

In his commentary on the section listing the Prophet's names ﷺ, al-Fāsi stated:

[i.e., the name Muhammad] is the proper name for its essence ﷺ. Allah Most High says, "Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah." [Quran 33:40] It is derived from an adjective, its original meaning being a passive participle [ism *maḍ'ūl*] of the double enunciated verb *humada* and later transformed into a proper name that designates the Prophet ﷺ. It is a hyperbolic form, since the middle radical of a trilateral verb is given double enunciation when used for hyperbole. It was originally Mahmūd from the passive verb *humida*; then it received a double enunciation and the verb became *humida*, the passive participle of which is Muhammad. This hyperbolic form is because he receives praise repeatedly. The name Muhammad, therefore, designates one who is praised time and time again: the passive participle on the pattern of *mufa'al*—like *mudarrab* and *mumaddah*—is only given to one who is the object of that verb repeatedly.

Accordingly, the name Muhammad is completely congruent with the Prophet's essence and meaning ﷺ, since his essence—in its reality, qualities, form, character, works, states, sciences, rulings, and outward aspects—is praised upon the tongues of all beings from every angle.

Lo, he is the Praised One in the earth and in the heavens. He is also the Praised One in this life and the Next. In this life the Prophet ﷺ is the Praised One by virtue of the knowledge and wisdom to which he was guided and benefited from, and in the Hereafter he is the Praised One by virtue of the Intercession. In all of these instances the word praise has been repeated as is commensurate with his

name; yet he is also the One Given to Praise [al-Hāmid], since no one has praised him except with what he ﷺ has instructed him. Therefore he is the Prophet of all: he is the One Given to Praise, or, if you like, say he is the one who praises Allah in an absolute sense in reality, and by virtue of his praise of Allah Most High, Allah praised him upon the tongues of His servants.

The Prophet ﷺ is the One Given to Praise and he is the Praised; however, he is most fittingly called Ahmad insofar as the descent of the command and the action is concerned. And insofar as the command is conveyed and the object is concerned he is most fittingly called Muhammad. His name in the heavens is Ahmad and his name on the earth is Muhammad; hence he ﷺ is the best to praise and best of those who are praised. The fact of the matter is there is no one in the creation who has praised or who has received praise besides him ﷺ. And how could this not be so, when the Standard of Praise is in his hand and his is the Praiseworthy Station in which the first and the last shall praise him?

Al-Fāṣī said in his commentary upon *Dalā'il al-Khayr* that the bulk of these words are from Sheikh Abū 'Abdullāh al-Bakī in his *Sharḥ al-Hājiyya*. It should be added that the Prophet ﷺ was not Muhammad until he was first Ahmad. That is because he praised his Lord before the people praised Him. This is likewise the order in which his named occurred in the physical world, for his name Ahmad is found in the previous Scriptures, while his name Muhammad came in the Quran. Furthermore, Ahmad is also derived from an adjective that is superlative, i.e., he is the best of those who praise his Lord. The Prophet ﷺ is also Ahmad in the spiritual world because when

he assumes the Praiseworthy Station he shall receive praises of his Lord that no one received before him, and he will utter those praises of his Lord and receive the Standard of Praise. Sheikh Abū 'Abdullāh al-Bakī continued:

Both the spelling and form of this name contain subtle spiritual allusions. With regards to its spelling, the letter *mīm* may be said to represent the *mīm* in the loftiest *Malakūt* [sovereign realm] while the *hā'* is for the life [*ḥayāt*] and protection [*ḥifz*] that the Exalted Pen had written for him; and the [second] *mīm* represents the inner *Malakūt* in the outward *Mulk* [dominion], followed by the letter *dāl*, which represents permanence [*dawām*] and connection that efface any imagined individuation and severance.

With regards to the form of this name, it takes the appearance of man: the first *mīm* is the head, the *hā'* is the arms, the second *mīm* is the midsection, and the *dāl* is the two legs.

Sheikh 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Bisṭāmī said in chapter two of his *Durrat al-zawān fi ru'yat Qur'ān al-Layl*:

No one has truly received this holy name in its full reality before him or after him ﷺ. All that people have received is a certain level of co-sharing with the word itself. They have not shared in its meaning. With the exception of the Prophet ﷺ, there is no one without a degree of imperfection—no matter how small—affecting him, even if that imperfection lies in his inability to attain the perfections of the Prophet's rank ﷺ. This person, therefore, does not bear the name Muhammad in an absolute sense, because that description—i.e., his inability to attain the epitome of

perfections—is a type of blame, and no one who has a degree of blame can bear the name Muhammad in reality. Hence, there is no Muhammad but Muhammad ﷺ. In this connection, when the pagans of Mecca attempted to produce invective poetry [*hijā'*] against the Prophet ﷺ, Allah diverted them from it ﷺ since his reality contains no speck of imperfection, and instead they delivered their invective against Mudhannan, who is Satan. This name Mudhannan is the most comprehensive of names given to Satan and his minions, since its meaning includes extreme imperfections and blemishes. And because it is at the opposite end of the name [Muhammad] and since neither of them share in the qualities of the other, it is not possible for Satan to impersonate the form of the Prophet ﷺ.

A question might arise concerning the derivation of the name Muhammad ﷺ from Allah's name Mahmūd [The Praiseworthy], as Hassān b. Thābit ﷺ said in his couplet:

*He portioned out to him from His name,
in order that he be exalted*

*For He is the Possessor of the Throne, the one who is Praised
And this is Muhammad [The Oft-Praised]*

Why, some might ask, is the name Muhammad a hyperbolic form although Allah's name is not? To this we say: Since the Prophet ﷺ was a human being [*bashar*] and it is not in the nature of human beings to possess perfect qualities or attain their utmost degrees, there was a need to use a hyperbolic form for his name ﷺ in order to make it known that he is not like other human beings in his description. Nay, his mirror [*mir'āt*] is receptive [*qābil*] to all of the realities [*ḥaqā'iq*] of the Name and Attributes.

Sayyidī Abū al-Mawāhib al-Shādhilī ﷺ stated in *Qawānīn al-sharā'if*:

Allah the Exalted says, "And [remember] when We said to the angels, 'Prostrate to Adam,' and they all prostrated. ..." [Quran 2:34] If you ask, "But prostrating to other than Allah is unlawful [*ḥarām*], so how was it allowed [for them to] prostrate?" we respond: The meaning of this prostration is submissiveness and humility coming from one who is less to one who is greater; it is not the prostration of a subject to his lord, for Adam ﷺ was a servant, not a lord; however, he was honored in his Adamic form due to the manifestation of the Muhammadan sublimity [within him].

This, O possessors of spiritual taste and depth, is what obligated the prostration in the niche [*mihrāb*], for Adam's head is a *min*, his hands are a *hā'*; his midsection is a *min*, and the rest of his body is a *dal*, and this is how it was written in ancient times. ... Our view is substantiated by the couplet of our master [i.e., Sīdī 'Alī al-Wafā' ﷺ]:

*Had he seen in Adam's face the appearance of his light
Satan would have prostrated before all others!*

Indeed, the Prophet ﷺ is the light of all the Messengers and Prophets, and the light of the righteous and godfearing, as he said:

*Isā, Adam, and the early ones, as reported
Are eyes, for whom he is their light!*

That is because Allah gathered unto the Prophet ﷺ the light of the Prophets, the instruction of the Messengers, and the guidance of the saints, and preferred him ﷺ with the light of finality [*nūr al-khātam*].

There is a subtle point here as well: If you say that the first *mīm* in the name Muhammad is composed of three letters [*m-t-m*], and the *hā'* counts as two [*h* and *alif*], for the *hamza* is not counted since it is *alif*, and the double enunciated *mīm* counts as six letters and the *dāl* is counted as three letters [*d-ā-l*]—if you count all of the letters in his name ﷺ, the apparent and the concealed [i.e., the individual spellings of each letter], you will get 314 in total. Now, 313 is the number of the Messengers who gather within them prophecy, and the 1 remaining is for the station of sainthood that is distributed among all of the saints who follow the Prophets and him—may Allah send prayers and salutations upon him and them!

There remains here a delicate point, and that is the fact that of the distributed numbers, the only one remaining for the saints is solitary [*Fradl*], and that is because there exist among the saints Solitaries [*Afṭād*] who have been uniquely conferred with the actualization of solitariness. For a single one of those Solitaries, the Real has made him the gathering point of the light of his age. This ineffable solitariness [*al-daqīqa al-fardāniyya*] is from the comprehensive Muhammadan reality [*al-haqīqa al-jāmi'a al-Muhammadiyya*], as one said:

It is not at all impossible for Allah

To envelop the world and place it in a single person

In his book *Kashf al-asār 'ammā khafā min al-qhār*, Sheikh Shihāb al-Dīn Ahmad b. al-Imād al-Miqāṣī mentioned that the Prophet's noble name contains ten unique qualities. He said:

...[F]ourth, the Prophet's name ﷺ was written on the heights of the Throne. It is reported that the Throne was shaking after Allah created it, but when He wrote upon it the name Muhammad ﷺ it settled [*sakana*]. This narration also brings attention to the fact that the Prophet is the greatest creation ﷺ....

And he said regarding the letters of the Prophet's name ﷺ:

Al-Naysabūrī mentions: "A folk say that the [first] *mīm* stands for the effacement [*maḥw*] of disbelief through Islam, or the effacement of sins for those who follow him. It is also said that the *mīm* stands for the phrase 'Allah has conferred His favor [*manna Allāh*] upon the believers,' while others say it stands for the dominion [*mulk*] of his nation, or the Praiseworthy Station [*al-Maqām al-Mahmūd*].

"As for the letter *hā'*, it is said that it stands for his judgment [*ḥukm*] between creation with the rulings of Allah Most High. Allah says, 'But no, by your Lord, they will not believe until they make you the arbiter in all things that arise among them, and they find not in their souls any objections, and submit fully.' [Quran 4:55] It is also said that the *hā'* stands for the life [*ḥayāt*] of his nation.

"As for the second *mīm*, it stands for Allah's forgiveness [*maghfira*] for the Prophet's nation. It is also said that it stands for the rallying cry [*imnādā*] of the monotheists.

"As for the *dāl*, it stands for 'the caller unto Allah Most High.' Allah says, 'And a caller unto Allah and an illuminating lamp.' [Quran 33:47] The Prophet ﷺ is their guide in this world and the Next, guiding them to Paradise."

And how beautiful is the statement of Imam al-Buṣfirī:

He said, "I have from him guarantee of safety [lithimā] having received the name Muḥammad; And he is the most faithful of creation in safe passage"

Shihāb al-Dīn Ahmad al-Qasālānī—may Allah have mercy upon him—said in his commentary upon this couplet:

These lines of the author prove that is encouraged to take the Prophet's name ﷺ and there are several hadith reports to that effect. Of them, there is [after mentioning the chain to Hamīd al-Tawīl] on the authority of Anas who said, "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, 'Two servants shall be made to stand before Allah, the Exalted and Majestic, and He shall command that they are entered into Paradise, whereupon they will say, "O Lord! What has caused us to merit Paradise when we did not perform actions that would earn it?" Allah, the Exalted and Majestic, shall say, "Enter, My servants, for I have taken it upon Myself that no one named Ahmad or Muḥammad shall enter the Hellfire."'"

Nabī b. Shurayz reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Allah, the Exalted and Majestic, says, 'By My Honor and Majesty, I shall not punish with Hell anyone who takes your name.'" This was recorded by Abū Nu'aym, Abū 'Alī al-Haddād, and Abū Mansūr al-Daylamī in his *Musnad al-firāus*, the latter having recorded it with a raised [*mafī'*] chain of transmission and said, "Its chain is fully connected." It is recorded from Ja'far b. Muḥammad that, on the Day of Resurrection, a caller will cry out, "Hearken! Let him stand whose name is Muḥammad and enter Paradise on account of the nobility of the Prophet's name ﷺ!" In another wording of this tradition it says: "On the Day of Resurrection a caller

shall say, 'O Muḥammad!' whereupon anyone whose name is Muḥammad shall raise his head on the Judgment Plain and Allah—the Exalted and Majestic—shall say, 'I call you to bear witness that I have forgiven everyone who has the same name as Muḥammad, My Prophet!'"

And on the authority of Abū Umāma ؓ: "Whoever has a child and names him Muḥammad with the intention of seeking blessings, both he and his child shall be in Paradise." This was recorded by [Abū Mansūr al-Daylamī], author of *Musnad al-firāus*, as well as his son Mansūr. They also recorded on the authority of 'Alī b. Abī Talīb ؓ who said, "There is no table spread laid out that is attended by someone named Ahmad or Muḥammad save that Allah will sanctify that house twice each day."

All praise is due to Allah—I have a guarantee of safety from the Prophet ﷺ on account of my name Ahmad, which is like his noble name. And I ask of Allah's grace, mercy, and providence that, just as He favored me with the Prophet's name, to also string me in the necklace of his lovers and heirs.

Sayyid Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī said:

Safety has been guaranteed for me—and to Allah is all praise—by the Selected One [*al-Muqtāfī*] on account of having a name like his: Muṣṭafā. One of the people of illuminatory disclosure from the masters of loyalty, whose cup was brimming with the spring of purity, informed me that a certain dervish possessed numerous spiritual realities that received tremendous names, and that one of those realities was given this noble name [Muṣṭafā]; however, the name al-Zāhir [The Manifest] presides over them and assumes, according to the station, the quality of preeminence [*taqātm*].

In his commentary upon the *Burda*, al-Afghāḥī says (may Allah have mercy upon him):

In addition to what was quoted earlier from al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (may Allah have mercy upon him), it is mentioned that Allah Most High will make a servant named Ahmad or Muhammad stand before Him on the Day of Resurrection, and will call out to Jibrīl ʿalayhī ṣ, saying, "Take My servant by the hand and enter him into Paradise, for I am loathe to punish in the Fire anyone who is named after My beloved Muhammad!"

It is reported from 'Alī b. Mūsā, from his father, who reported from his grandfather ʿ, who related that the Messenger of Allah ʿ said, "If you give someone the name Muhammad, see to it that your exaltation of [the Prophet] Muhammad leads you to revere him, respect him, and honor him. Do not humiliate him, abase him, or reject his words." Wāḥibā b. al-Asqa ʿ reported that the Messenger of Allah ʿ said, "If someone has three boys and fails to name one of them Muhammad, he has acted ignorantly."

ʿAlī ʿ is reported to have said, "Never do a people gather for consultation, and in whose midst is a man named Muhammad, yet they exclude him, except that they are denied blessings."

Abū Hurayra ʿ reported that the Messenger of Allah ʿ said, "Poverty shall not enter a home that contains my name."

Sayyid Mustafā al-Bakrī commented on this:

The numerical value of this noble name corresponds to the numerical value of the Divine Names Bāṣit [Expander] and

Wadūd [Loving]. It is therefore fitting that anyone named Muhammad should invoke [Allah] with these two names.

Moreover, our teacher, Sheikh Muhammad al-Khalīf, currently residing in Jerusalem, mentioned that some of his Sheikh's transmitted to him the name *Amān* [Security], a divine name whose numerical value is the same as the value of the name Muhammad ʿ. This Sheikh—may Allah forever aid him—also has an epistle he wrote about this noble Muhammadan name, and he informed me that it was his intention to pen a commentary on it in order to earn an immense reward. He is one of my teachers who invested me with spiritual Sheikhood, may Allah confer upon him a bountiful reward!

Al-Yāfi'ī said in his *al-Durr al-nāzim fī khaṣāṣ al-Qur'ān al-Azīm*:

One of my companions related to me from one of his Sheikhs who said that Sheikh Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn al-'Arabī stated, "Whoever calculates the numerical value of his name and searches for an equivalent value in one of Allah's beautiful names, he will find a corresponding name. If he finds with it only one name [that is well and good], and if he doesn't find a single corresponding name, let him seek two, three, or four corresponding names."

An example of this is the name Muhammad: its numerical value is ninety-two¹, and when we look for a single corresponding name we do not find one; but when we look for two names corresponding to its numerical value we find *Awwal* [First] and *Dā'im* [Everlasting]. And when we look for three names corresponding to its numerical value we do not find them, but when we look for four of Allah's beautiful names corresponding to it we find *Hayy*

[Living], Wahhāb [Bestower], Wājīd [Resourceful], and Wālī [Protector].

One who is [named Muhammad] should recite the opening chapter [al-Fātiḥa] ninety-two times—or the numerical value of one's name [if it is not Muhammad]—and then recite *Āyat al-Kursī*, the two chapters for seeking refuge [al-Falaq and al-Nāsi], as well as the chapter '*Have We not expanded...*' [al-Sharḥ] a similar number of times. After that he should invoke the four names mentioned above the same number of times, taking it as an act of constant spiritual discipline [*riyāḍa*]. After completing the set number of invocations he should then pray, 'O Hayy [Living], enliven my mention and provide for me' [or as he likes], 'O Wahhāb [Bestower], grant me such-and-such,' 'O Wājīd [Grantor], grant me such-and-such resource,' and 'O Wālī [Protecting Friend], turn to me in protection'—and he can apply a similar formula for the other names.⁴

It is related from some Sheikhs that if a single numeral is added to the value of Allah's name Salām, it will correspond to the name Muhammad ﷺ. For if we say that the double enunciated *mīm* counts as two letters, the value is 132. This name [Salām] has a connection to the name Muhammad ﷺ because the Prophet is the center of the world [*Qalb al-Ālam*], and [Sūra] Yāsīn is the center of the Quran, and the verse "[*Salām*]: a word from a merciful Lord [*qaṭʿan min Rabbin Raḥīm*]" [Quran 36:58] is the center of Yāsīn. Salām means security [*amān*] and the Prophet ﷺ is a security, as he said: "Allah Most High has revealed to me two securities for my nation: 'And Allah is not about to punish them while you are amongst them, and Allah shall not punish them so long as they

⁴ That is to say, the numerical value is ninety-two when each letter is assigned its proper value without splitting each letter and spelling out its sound.—Tr

seek forgiveness.' [Quran 8:33] So after I have moved on I leave with you the act of seeking forgiveness until the Day of Resurrection. . . ."

I once saw a book that spoke exclusively about the virtues of the names Ahmad and Muhammad. It was compiled by the hadith master Abū 'Abdullāh al-Husayn b. Ahmad b. Abdullāh b. Bukayr, and was transcribed by Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muhammad, better known as Ibn al-Farīr al-Dimashqī, the grandson of Sheikh al-Islām al-Qutb al-Khudayrī. It was written in the year 989 AH in Damascus, Syria, and on its cover, under the title written by the author, the following is written⁵:

All praises are due to Allah alone. I relate this book from our Sheikh, Sheikh al-Islām Shams al-Dīn Muhammad b. Abī al-Luṭf al-Maqdisī al-Shāfi'i, transcribed from what he wrote to me from Jerusalem from his teacher, Sheikh al-Islām al-Kamal b. Abī al-Sharīf al-Maqdisī, who in turn transmitted it from his teacher, the Sheikh of the Mashāyikh al-Islām and chief judge [*iqāḍī al-quḍātī*], Abū al-Faḍl Shihāb al-Dīn Ahmad son of 'Alī b. Ḥajar, the two Shāfi'is.

He said, "The hadith specialist and devotee Zayn al-'Abidin Abū al-Faraj Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ahmad b. Mubārak b. Hammād al-Ghazzī, better known as Ibn al-Shaykhā—may Allah have mercy upon him—*informed us via Abū al-Abbās Ahmad b. Ya'qūb al-Sābūnī*, al-Fakhr Abū al-Hasan 'Alī b. Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Wāhid al-Hanbalī, better

⁵ For the sake of brevity and clarity, the single guillemet ligature (•) has been used to mark the quotations in which traditional phrases of narration are used, such as "narrated to me," "informed me," or "on the authority of," etc.—Tr

known as Ibn al-Bukhārī, Abū Hafṣ, Umar b. Muḥammad b. Ṭabarzad [through audition (*ṣamāʿ*)] and ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Muḥammad b. al-Akhdar, Yahyā b. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. al-Ṭarrāh, al-Husayn b. Ahmad b. ‘Abdullāh b. Bukayr who mentioned:

In the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Compassionate. The Sheikh and hadith master Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Maḥmūd b. al-Mubārak b. Maḥmūd al-Janābīdhī related to us through our reading in his presence, and I heard it from him in Dhū al-Ḥijja in the year 588 AH in Baghdad, that before the [*ḥumʿa* prayer] on Friday the 2nd of Ramaḍān, 535 AH, the righteous Sheikh Abū Muḥammad Yahyā b. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. al-Ṭarrāh al-Mudīr informed the noble judge Abū al-Ḥasan Muḥammad b. Ahmad b. ‘Abdullāh b. ‘Abd al-Ṣamad al-Mahdi through the reading of ‘Alī b. Muḥammad in Dhū al-Ḥijja 469 AH:

The hadith master Abū ‘Abdullāh b. Ahmad b. ‘Abdullāh b. Bukayr informed us, saying:

Section: On the Reports with Good Chains of Transmission and Resplendent Beauty That Are Relied Upon Concerning the Virtue of He Whose Name is Ahmad or Muḥammad.

[1] Ahmad b. ‘Abdullāh narrated to us from my grandfather who narrated to my father Abū al-Abbās Sadāqa b. Mūsā b. Tamīm b. Rabīʿa b. Damra al-Chanawī, freed bondsman of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, Ḥumayd al-Tawīl [via his father], Anas b. Mālik ۞: “The Messenger of Allah ۞ said: ‘Two servants shall be made to stand before Allah, the Exalted and Majestic, and He shall command that they are entered

into Paradise, whereupon they will say, ‘O Lord! What has caused us to merit Paradise when we did not perform actions that would earn it?’ Allah, the Exalted and Majestic, shall say, ‘Enter, My servants, for I have taken it upon Myself that no one named Ahmad or Muḥammad shall enter the Hellfire.’”

[2] Abū al-Ḥasan Ḥāmid b. Hammād b. al-Mubārak narrated to me via ‘Abdullāh al-‘Askarī with two wordings, Ishaq b. Sayyār b. Muḥammad Abū Muḥammad Abū Ya‘qūb al-Nasīb, Ḥajjāj b. al-Minhāl, Hammād b. Sanama, Bard b. Sinān, Makhūl, Abū Umāma al-Bāhīlī ۞, who reported: “The Messenger of Allah ۞ said, ‘Whoever has a child and names him Muḥammad with the intention of seeking blessings, both he and his child shall be in Paradise.’”

[3] Muḥammad b. ‘Abdullāh al-Ḥadrāmī narrated to us via Ḥabī b. Nasr b. Ziyād al-Muhallabī, ‘Abd al-Samad b. Muḥammad b. Muḡāil al-Abbādānī (in ‘Abbādān), Mansūr b. ‘Ikrima (in ‘Abbādān at our hospice), Abū al-‘Alā Bard b. Sinān, Makhūl, Abū Umāma al-Bāhīlī ۞, who reported: “The Messenger of Allah ۞ said, ‘Whoever has a child and names him Muḥammad out of love for me and with the intention of seeking blessings, both he and his child shall be in Paradise.’”

[4] Abū al-Ḥasan Ahmad b. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn b. al-Faraj al-Wāfiqī al-Sakarī al-Muqrī narrated to us via al-Qāsim b. ‘Alī b. Abnān al-‘Alāf, ‘Alī b. Maymūn al-‘Aṭār, ‘Uthmān b. ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Ṭarrāfi, Umar b. Mūsā al-Wājihī, Qāsim, Wāhila b. al-‘Asqā ۞, who reported: “The Messenger of Allah ۞ said, ‘If someone has three boys and fails to name

one of them Muhammad, he has acted ignorantly.”

[5] Abū al-Husayn Sillār b. ‘Alī b. Ayyūb al-Bājiḍ narrated to us via Abū Badr Ahmad b. Khālid b. Musarrāh al-Harrānī, his uncle al-Walīd b. ‘Abd al-Malik b. Musarrāh al-Harrānī, Mūsā b. Ayyūb, Layth b. Abī Salīm, Mujāhid b. Jabr, ‘Abdullāh b. Abbās ؓ, who reported: “The Messenger of Allah ؑ said, ‘If someone who has three children fails to name one of them Muhammad, he has acted ignorantly.’”

[6] Abū al-Qāsim b. Abū al-Kharrāb narrated to me verbally via Abū ‘Umar and al-Shāhid at Anbar, ‘Alī b. Muhammad al-Nakhaṭī, Muhammad b. Mansūr al-Ramādī, ‘Abdullāh b. Dāhīr al-Rāzī, ‘Amr b. Junnī, Ja‘far b. Muhammad from his father, from his grandfather, who reported: “The Messenger of Allah ؑ said, ‘One who has been provided three boys and does not name one of them Muhammad is of the ignorant.’”

[7] Abū Muhammad Ismā‘īl b. al-Husayn b. al-Hasan b. Hārūn al-Faḡīh al-Bukhārī narrated to us via Abū Šālih Khālaf b. Muhammad b. Ismā‘īl, Hāmid b. Saḥl b. al-Ḥārith, Quṭayba b. Sa‘īd, Ibrāhīm b. Zakariyyā, ‘Abd al-Malik b. Hārūn b. Antara from his father, from his grandfather ؓ, who reported: “The Messenger of Allah ؑ said, ‘If someone who has three children fails to name one of them Muhammad, he has acted coarsely with me.’”

[8] Abū al-Abbās Muhammad b. Yā qūb b. Ma‘qal b. Sīnān informed us through his own handwriting, on the authority of al-Hasan b. ‘Alī b. ‘Alfān al-‘Amīr, ‘Uthmān b. ‘Abd al-Rahmān, Abū Sa‘īd Naṣīf b. Muhammad b. al-Hasan b.

Alluwayh b. Hayyawayh b. Yūsuf b. Wāqid b. Hazawwar al-Alluwayh al-Shāṭi‘ī, Abū al-Abbās Muhammad b. Yā qūb Abwardī al-Shāṭi‘ī, Abū al-Abbās Muhammad b. Yā qūb b. Ma‘qal, al-Husayn b. ‘Alī b. ‘Alfān, ‘Uthmān b. ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Harrānī, Ahmad b. Haḡ al-Jazarī, Abū al-Tufayl ‘Amīr b. Wāthila al-Laythī, from ‘Alī b. Abī Tālib ؓ, who reported that the Messenger of Allah ؑ said, “Never who reported that for consultation, and in whose midst is a do a people gather for consultation, yet they exclude him, except that man named Muhammad, yet they exclude him, except that they are denied blessings.”

[9] It is narrated from al-Husayn b. ‘Alī b. Abī Tālib from his father ؓ that the Prophet ﷺ said, “Never is a person named Ahmad or Muhammad included in a people’s mutual consultation except that it will be better for them.” This report was related to me by Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Yā qūb via ‘Abdullāh b. Ahmad b. ‘Amīr b. Sulaymān al-Tā‘ī from his father, ‘Alī b. Mūsā al-Ridā, Mūsā b. Ja‘far, his father Ja‘far b. Muhammad, his father Muhammad b. ‘Alī, his father ‘Alī b. al-Husayn, his father al-Husayn b. ‘Alī, his father ‘Alī b. Abī Tālib, Ibn ‘Ubaydillāh Ahmad b. ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Dhahabī and ‘Ubaydullāh b. Yāhyā b. Zakariyyā b. Yazīd b. Abī ‘Umar al-Daqīqī, Abū Tālib ‘Abdullāh b. Muhammad b. al-Hasan b. Shihāb al-Bakrī, ‘Abdullāh b. Muhammad b. Chiyāth Abū al-Qāsim al-Harawī, the Khorasani hadith recorder, Ahmad b. ‘Amīr b. Sulaymān al-Tā‘ī, ‘Alī b. Mūsā al-Ridā, his father Mūsā, his father Ja‘far, his father Muhammad, his father ‘Alī, his father Husayn who narrated that his father ‘Alī b. Abī Tālib ؓ said: “The Messenger of Allah ؑ said, ‘There are no people who consult among themselves and include among them someone named Ahmad or Muhammad except that it will be better for them.’”

[10] Abū Ḥafṣ al-Fārūq b. 'Abd al-Kabir b. 'Umar al-Khaṭṭābī in Basra narrated to me via al-'Abbās b. al-Faḍl al-Iṣfā'ir > Abū 'Uthmān Sa'īd b. Sulaymān al-Naṣbiq > Abdullāh b. Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm b. 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Baghawī al-Daqīqī > Ziyād b. al-Khalīl al-Tustarī, Sa'īd b. Sulaymān Abū 'Uthmān, al-Hakam b. 'Atīyya > Thābit who reported that Anas b. Mālik ﷺ said: "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, 'They name them [their children] Muhammad and then they insult them!'"

[11] Muḥammad b. 'Abdullāh al-'Askarī narrated to me via Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl b. Yūsuf b. Ismā'īl al-Tirmidhī al-Salmī, Ibrāhīm b. Humayd al-Tawīl > al-Hakam b. 'Atīyya > Thābit al-Bunānī who reported that Anas b. Mālik ﷺ said: "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, 'They name him [their child] Muhammad and then they insult him!'"

[12] Ahmad b. Muḥammad b. 'Abdullāh b. 'Abbād narrated to me via Muḥammad b. Ghālib Abū Ja'far al-Dabī, Ibrāhīm b. Hamīd al-Tawīl > al-Hakam b. 'Atīyya > Thābit al-Bunānī who reported that Anas b. Mālik ﷺ said: "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, 'They name him [their child] Muhammad and then they insult him!'"

[13] Ahmad b. Muḥammad b. al-Jarrāh and Ahmad b. Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb both narrated to me via 'Abdullāh b. Ahmad b. 'Amīr b. Sulaymān al-Tā'ī > 'Alī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā, Abū al-Tayyib 'Ubaydullāh Ahmad b. al-Dhahabī of Ukbara and 'Ubaydullāh b. Yābyā b. Zakariyyā b. Yazīd b. Abī 'Amr al-Daqīqī > Abū Tālib 'Abdullāh b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. Shihāb al-'Ukbarī > Abū al-Qāsim 'Abdullāh b. Muḥammad b. Ghīyāth al-Harawī al-Khurāsānī, the hadīth

writer, Ahmad b. 'Amīr b. Sulaymān al-Tā'ī > 'Alī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā, his father Abū Mūsā b. Ja'far > his father Ja'far b. Muḥammad, his father Muḥammad b. 'Alī, his father 'Alī al-Ḥusayn, his father al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī who said: "My father 'Alī b. Abī Tālib ﷺ said, 'The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, 'There is no table spread laid out that is attended by someone named Ahmad or Muḥammad save that Allah will sanctify that house twice each day.'""

[14] Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad b. Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm b. Ismā'īl b. Muḥammad b. Abān b. Abī al-Khaṭṭāb narrated to me verbally via Abū 'Amr 'Ubaydullāh b. Abdullāh b. al-Ḥasan al-Shāhid al-Anbārī of Anbar > 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Nakhaṭī Abū al-Qāsim > Muḥammad b. Mansūr al-Ramādī > 'Abdullāh b. Dāhīr al-Rāzī > 'Amr b. Junayf > Ja'far b. Muḥammad > from his father, from his grandfather, who said: "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, 'If you give someone the name Muḥammad, see to it that your exaltation of [the Prophet] Muḥammad leads you to revere him, respect him, and honor him. Do not humiliate him, abase him, or defy him.'"

In the book of 'Alī b. Bardār al-Bardā'ī I found the following:

[15] Abū 'Isā Muḥammad b. Ahmad b. Maṭar narrated to me via Abū Aswad Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Yābyā b. Ḥafṣ al-Faryābī > Muḥammad b. Rajā' al-Wāsiṭ > 'Uthmān b. Zakariyyā al-Rāzī and Ḥushaym b. Bashīr > Yūnus b. 'Ubayd who reported that al-Ḥasan al-Basrī (may Allah have mercy upon him) said, "On the Day of Resurrection, Allah—the Exalted and Sublime—shall take a servant named Ahmad or Muḥammad, make him stand before Him, and say to

Abū Ishāq al-Sabīʿī, al-Iṣbāgh b. Nabāta, ʿAlī b. Abī Talīb ۞ who reported that the Prophet ۞ said, "There is no household with a member named after a Prophet except that Allah will send an angel who will sanctify them by night and day."

[21] Abū al-Qāsim ʿUbaydullāh b. Ahmad b. Yahyā b. Mansūr b. al-Muʿāfi al-Azdī al-ʿAdl, Abū Bakr b. ʿAbdullāh b. Ahmad b. ʿAlī al-Khaṭīb (via dictation), Abū Bakr al-Qāsim b. Abd al-Rahmān al-Anḥārī, Muḥammad b. Yahyā b. Razīn al-Massīṣī, Ismāʿīl b. Yahyā b. Ubaydullāh b. Talha b. ʿAbd al-Rahmān b. Abī Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, ʿAbd al-Rahmān b. Rawḥ, al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad, ʿĀʾisha ۞ reported that the Messenger of Allah ۞ said, "No lawful food is ever eaten in the company of a man whose name is like mine except that the blessings of the people's food is multiplied."

[22] Muḥammad b. ʿAbdullāh al-ʿAskarī narrated to us via Abū Yā qūb Ishāq b. al-Ḥasan b. Maymūn al-Ḥarībī, Muslim b. Ibrāhīm, Shaddād b. Saʿīd al-Rāsī, Saʿīd al-Jarīrī, Abū Nadra, Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī and ʿAbdullāh b. Abbās ۞ both reported that the Messenger of Allah ۞ said, "Whoever has a child must raise him well and name him well, and see to it the he gets married once he attains maturity. If he reaches the age of maturity and the father fails to marry him off and he falls into a sin as result, the burden of sin falls on the father as well."

[23] On the day when I read this collection, Abū al-Ḥasan al-Muhtadī informed me: "Abū ʿAbdullāh b. Ahmad b. Bukayr narrated to me via ʿAbd al-Rahīm al-Ḥarawī, Malik b. Sulaymān al-Ḥarawī, Dāwūd b. ʿAbd al-Rahmān al-ʿAṭar

Ḥishām b. ʿUrwa, his father, ʿĀʾisha ۞ who reported that the Messenger of Allah ۞ said, "There are three types of gifts: a gift that is given to return a favor, a gift that is given to deflect criticism, and a gift which Allah rewards."

This marks the conclusion of the book *Fadāʾil man ismuhu Ahmad aw Muḥammad* (The Virtues of one Whose Name Ahmad or Muḥammad), compiled by Abū ʿAbdullāh al-Ḥusayn b. Ahmad b. ʿAbdullāh b. Bukayr al-Ḥāfiẓ from the narrations transmitted from his Sheikh. All praises are due to Allah alone, and may His prayers be upon our master Muḥammad, and upon his Family and Companions, as well as his followers and lovers.

The Meaning of the Word Prophet (Nabi)

As for the word *nabi'* that is written with a *hamza*, it is said to mean a person who gives news or information, and is derived from the word *naba'*; or news. This word is used because the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ brings information from Allah. It is a subject-noun on the morphological pattern *fa'īl*. It is possible for it be an object-noun [*maf'ūl*], in which case it means one who receives information regarding Allah's commands and prohibitions. Those who hold this position argue that its plural form is *nabā'*, just as the plural of the word *zawj* [elegant] is *zawjā'*. 'Abbās b. Mirrās said:

*O Seal of the Prophets [at-nubū], indeed you are sent
[with good]*

*By the Real; nay, the guidance of God is your guidance!
God has lovingly lauded you among His creation
And He has certainly named you Muhammad!*

Alternatively, the word prophet is derived from the verb *nabī/yanbū*, which means to become prominent and manifest. In this case the word *nabī* is a subject-noun on the morphological pattern of *fa'īl*, meaning one who is prominent and manifest.

It may also be an object-noun [*maf'ūl*] that means one whom Allah has made prominent and manifest over the rest of His creation.

The word *nabi* might also derive from *naba'* which means a path, since the Prophet ﷺ is the path of Allah to His creation, and the one by means of whom they attain knowledge of their

(creator).

A Prophet [*Nabi*] is a person to whom a sacred law is revealed, although he is not [necessarily] ordered to convey it to others. If he is ordered to convey it to others, he is a Messenger [*Rasūl*]. In addition, a Prophet is a more general [class than a Messenger].

If you ask which of the two is superior, prophethood [*nubuwwat*] or messengership [*risālat*], Sheikh 'Izz al-Dīn b. 'Abd al-Salām answered in his collection of legal maxims [*Qawā'ir*] that prophethood is superior, because it involves revelation about the majestic attributes and perfect descriptions that befit the Lord, Exalted is He. This means that prophethood relates to Allah from both ends [i.e., the revelation to the Prophet is about Allah's attributes and is retained within the Prophet]. Being sent as a Messenger, on the other hand, is of a lesser rank, because it is a command to convey to Allah's servants, which means that it relates to Allah from one end and to the servants from the other end. Undoubtedly, that which is related to Allah from both ends is superior to that which is related to Him from one end only.

Prophethood precedes Messengership. We see that Allah's words to Mūsā ﷺ "*Indeed, I am Allah, [Quran 20:12]*" come before His command "*Go unto Fir'aun, certainly he has transgressed all limits.*" [Quran 20:24] Everything that Allah said to Mūsā before the command "*Go unto Fir'aun...*" was

prophethood, and His subsequent command that Mūsā convey the message was messengership.

The upshot of all this is that prophethood refers to gaining knowledge of Allah and what is necessary for Him, while messengership refers to the order to convey by divine fiat and inform some or all of the creation what is incumbent upon them in terms of knowing Allah, obeying His commands, and refraining from His prohibitions.⁶

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The Meaning of the Word Unlettered (*Ummī*)

[AlHāfiẓ al-Sakhāwī] said in *al-Qawl al-baṭī*:

The word *ummi*—with a double enunciation—is ascribed to the word *ummi*, and describes someone who can neither read nor write. It is as if the person's literacy skills are undeveloped, and he is likened to one who remains in the same state as when his mother bore him. Alternatively, the word *ummi* might refer to the word mother [*ummi*], since an unlettered person is like his mother, given that most women are illiterate.

It is also said that this word refers to [Mecca], the Mother of the Towns [*Umm al-Qurā*], or to the nation that is predominantly illiterate—the Arabs.

It is said that it is ascribed to the *Umma*, or nation, as a whole since the Prophet ﷺ is greatly concerned for it. It is also said that it refers to the "Mother of the Book" [*Umm al-Kitāb*], either because it was revealed to him ﷺ, or because he confirmed it and invited others to believe in it as well.

Some suggest that the word *ummi* is ascribed to *Umma*, as in stature and character, and others say it refers to the Arabs' simplicity before they learned things [from the outside world].

6 Slightly adapted from Imam al-Suyūṭī's *Maṣālik al-Hanaḡī*.

Our Prophet's unletteredness **ك** was a miracle considering the dazzling knowledge he was endowed with, as Allah Most High says, "And you did not write any scripture before it, nor did you inscribe one with your right hand, for had you done [so] falsifiers would have had [cause for] doubt." [Quran 29:48] It also states in the Holy Quran, "Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet..." [Quran 7:157] May Allah send plentiful prayers and salutations upon him, his Family, and his Companions!

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The Meaning of the Word Family (Āl)

There exist differences of opinion concerning the word "family" [Āl]. It is said to originate from [the word] *Ahl*, with the letter *hā'* having been transformed into a *hamza*. And there are differences of opinion also regarding who the Family of Muhammad [ﷺ] are, here. The most preponderant view, as stated explicitly by al-Shāfi'ī and preferred by the majority of scholars, is that they are the family members who are forbidden to receive charity. This view is borne out by the Prophet's words to al-Hasan b. 'Alī [reported by] Abū Hurayra: "Charity is not lawful for us, the family of Muhammad," as well as his statement in the *mayfū'* narration, "This charity is but from the filth [*lawsākh*] of people and is unlawful for Muhammad and the family of Muhammad."

[Imam] Ahmad said that "the family of Muhammad" mentioned in the testification at the closing of the prayer refers to his household [*Ahl Baytihi*], so the question is: is it permissible, on this basis, to replace the word *Āl* with *Ahl*? There are two reported opinions about this [one allowing it and another disallowing it].

It is said that "the family of Muhammad [Āl Muhammad]" refers to his wives and offspring because most of the routes of

transmission for the hadith [of the Abrahamic Prayer] mention the wording "the family of Muhammad," while in Abū Humayd's version of the hadith there appears in its place "and his wives and offspring," which proves that "the family" refers to his wives and offspring. It has been argued, however, that all three are shown to be gathered together, as we have seen in the hadith of Abū Hurayra mentioned above, so it is understood that some narrators remembered what others did not.

The meaning of "family" in the final testification of the prayer refers to the Prophet's wives and those who are forbidden from receiving charity, and that includes his offspring, too. This is how we reconcile between the different hadith on this.

In the hadith of 'Ā'isha رضي الله عنها the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم called his wives "the family of Muhammad" [as it states]: "The family of Muhammad never ate their fill of bread for three days in succession." And in the hadith of Abū Hurayra it mentions: "O Allah! Make the provision of the family of Muhammad enough to sustain them [*qātan*]." It's as if the Prophet's wives were mentioned in particular so as to praise them, as well as his offspring.

Abd al-Razzāq related in his hadith compilation [*Jami'*]: "On the authority of [Sufyān] al-Thawrī from whom I heard that a man asked him about the Prophet's words 'O Allah! Send prayers upon Muhammad and upon the family of Muhammad,' and inquired, 'Who are the family of Muhammad?' Al-Thawrī replied, 'There is a difference of opinion regarding them; some say the "family of Muhammad" are his household, some say they are those who obey him, and others say that the family refers to Fātima and her offspring in particular.'" This was cited by al-Nawawī in *Shahī al-Muhadhdhab*.

Some, like Ibn al-Rif'a in his *Kifāya*, maintain that the Prophet's family are the entirety of Quraysh. Others say that the Prophet's family includes the entire *Umma*—the *Umma* of response [*Umma al-ijāba*] in particular. Ibn al-Arabī said, "Mālik inclined to this view and it was the preferred opinion of al-Zuhri." Abū al-Tayyib al-Tabarī also cites this opinion from some of the Shāfi'i scholars, and it was deemed the most correct view according to al-Nawawī in his commentary upon [*Sahīh*] *Muslim*. Al-Qādi Husayn and al-Rāghib [al-Asfahānī] limited it to the godfearing among them (and that is how we are to interpret those who expressed it in unrestricted terms). This position is supported by Allah's words: "*His close allies are but the godfearing...*" [Quran 7:35]

In the *Nawādir* of Abū al-'Aynā' it is mentioned that he [Abū al-'Aynā'] once found fault with one of the Hāshimī scions, whereupon the Hāshimī objected: "Do you detract from my status even though you pray for me in each of your prayers, saying: 'O Allah! Send prayers upon Muhammad and upon the family of Muhammad?' Abū al-'Aynā' said, "I intend [by my prayer] the good and purified, and you are not among them!" This benefit was pointed out to us by our teacher.

Al-Khatīb narrates:

Yahyā b. Mu'adh went to see a scion of the family of 'Alī in either Balkh or Ray to visit and greet him. When he arrived, the Alawite asked Yahyā, "What is your view regarding us, the Ahl al-Bayt?" Yahyā replied, "What can I say about clay kneaded with the water of revelation and planted with the seedling of the tree of prophethood and watered with messengership? Can there emit from you anything but the fragrance of the musk of guidance and the ambergris of godfearingness?" The Alawite responded, "If you visit us, it

is on account of your graciousness, and if we visit you, it is on account your virtue—esteem is yours whether visiting or a visitor!¹"

[...] Then al-Hāfiẓ al-Sakhāwī says:

Our Sheikh said: "The view of those who say that the meaning of *salāt* is absolute mercy can be interpreted, and thus there is no need to restrict it to the godfearing. Those who maintain this position infer proof from the *marjū* hadith of Anas: "The family of Muhammad is every godfearing person." This was related by al-Tabarānī, although its chain of transmission is extremely weak [*ṭaḥīh jiddan*]. Al-Bayhaqī reported a similar wording from Jabir with a weak chain.

As for the Prophet's progeny ۞ described as the recipients of prayers in some hadith reports, they are his children and their children. But are the children of the daughters included among his family? The school of Malīk, al-Shāfi'ī, and a narration from Ahmad hold that they are included, since it is the consensus of the Muslims that the offspring of Fātima are included in the Prophet's progeny for whom others should pray. Ibn al-Hājib relates from the Malīkī school that the offspring of daughters are included since 'Isā is from the progeny of Ibrāhīm ۞ [despite having only matrilineal affiliation]. The school of Abū Hanīfa, and a narration from Ahmad, hold that they are not included in the Prophet's progeny, and the offspring of Fātima are an exception to that because of the nobility of that tremendous root.

As for the Prophet's wives ۞, the Mothers of the Believers—may Allah be pleased with them—the first of them is Khadija b. Khuwaylid ۞, followed by Sawdā' b. Zam'ā ۞.

and then 'Īsha b. Abī Bakr al-Siddīq ۞; the Prophet married no virgin other than her. After her comes Hafsa b. 'Umar al-Fārūq ۞, followed by Zaynab b. Khuzayma ۞—the only wife of the Prophet ۞ to die during his lifetime. After her comes Juwayriyya b. al-Hārith ۞ and then Rayhāna b. Sham'ūn ۞, Umm Habība Ramla b. Sufyān ۞, Safiyya b. Huyayy ۞, and Maymūna b. al-Hārith ۞.

These are the women whom the Prophet ۞ took in marriage and with whom he consummated his marriage. They are twelve women in total. There are seven more whose marriage contracts were completed but with whom he did not consummate the marriage. The act of sending prayers upon his wives is, therefore, part and parcel of prayers upon him, due to their dignity and the fact that they are forbidden to the *Umma*, [in marriage after him] and since they are the Prophet's womenfolk in this life and the Next.

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Concerning the Name Ibrāhīm

Ibn al-Qayyim mentions:

In Syriac, the name Ibrāhīm means merciful father [*abb rahīm*]. Allah—glorified is He!—made Ibrāhīm the third father of humanity, our first father being Ādam and our second one being Nūh. Therefore, the inhabitants of the earth are all from the progeny of Ibrāhīm. The Exalted said, “*And We made his descendants the remaining ones.*” [Quran 37:77] The third father is the father of the Prophets, the foundation of the world, and the leader of the monotheists whom Allah—glorified is He!—took as an Intimate Friend [Khāfi] and to whose progeny He entrusted prophethood and the scripture.

He is the intimate friend of the All-Merciful, the elder of the Prophets, and Allah called him an Imam, a nation unto himself, and one devoutly obedient and upright in worship. The Exalted said, “*And [remember] when Ibrāhīm’s Lord tried him with some commands and he fulfilled them. He said, ‘I shall make you a leader for people.’*” [Quran 2:124] And He said, “*Indeed, Ibrāhīm was a nation [umma] unto himself, devoutly obedient, and an upright monotheist.*” [Quran 16:120] An *umma* is an exemplar who teaches people good, a devoutly obedient person [*qānī*] is a person who is ever

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vigilant, keen to obey Allah; and an upright monotheist [*ḥanīf*] is one who turns his entire being to Allah and shuns all else besides Him (for one who turns wholeheartedly to something turns away from other than it).

As such, Ibrāhīm is our third father and the Imam of the upright monotheists. The People of the Scripture call him the mainstay of the world [*amūd al-ālam*] and all [three] religions agree that he is revered and loved. The best of his offspring and the master of the children of Ādam, Muḥammad ﷺ, would exalt him and hold him in great esteem. In fact, the Prophet ﷺ bore the closest resemblance to him out of all creation, as is mentioned in *Ṣaḥīḥ [al-Bukhārī]*: “I beheld Ibrāhīm, and lo, the closest of people in resemblance to him is your companion [i.e., himself ﷺ].”

Prophet Ibrāhīm—may Allah’s prayers be upon him and our Prophet—was the first person to serve a meal to a guest, the first to get circumcised, and the first person to get gray hair—he is reported to have said, “O Lord! What is this?” Allah said, “It is dignity.” He said, “O Lord, increase me in dignity!”

It has been said: “His heart was for the All-Merciful, his son for the sacrifice, his body for the fire, and his wealth for his two guests.”

When Ibrāhīm’s Lord took him as an Intimate Friend—and this intimate friendship [*khullā*] is a perfect love, a station that refuses co-sharing and rivalry—he asked Him to grant him a righteous son, so his Lord granted him Ismā‘īl. This son took a portion of his heart; but an Intimate Friend is protective over the object of his intimacy, protective against there remaining any place for other than him. As a result, Allah tested Ibrāhīm with the command to sacrifice

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his son so as to manifest the secret of intimate friendship in preferring the love of the intimate friend over his son. When Ibrāhīm submitted to his Lord's command and resolved to do as told, and when the sultan of intimate friendship manifested itself in his stepping forward to sacrifice his son out of preference to the love of his Intimate Friend over the love of his son, Allah abrogated the command and in his stead a great [animal] sacrifice was made.

When the enemies of Allah kindled a fire and mounted Ibrāhīm on a catapult to cast him in it, the Angel Jibrīl appeared to him between the heavens and the earth and said, "O Ibrāhīm! Do you have any need?" And Ibrāhīm replied, "As for any need from you, no." As a result, Allah made the fire a coolness and peace for him.

Al-Tirmidhī narrated from Ibn Mas'ūd who reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "I met with Ibrāhīm during the night in which I was taken on the nocturnal journey [isrā'] and he said to me, 'O Muhammad! Convey salutations to your nation and inform them that Paradise has good soil and fresh water, and is fertile; its seedlings are the phrases "Transcendent is Allah," "All praise is due to Allah," "There is no god but Allah," and "Allah is the Greatest."'" Al-Tirmidhī remarked, "This hadith is authentic [hasan]."

With regards to the family of Ibrāhīm ﷺ, they are—as a group of scholars held—his progeny from Ismā'īl and Ishāq, and if it is affirmed that he had children from other than Sāra and Hājar they will undoubtedly be included [among his family], too. Moreover, the intended recipients [of the supplication for the family of Ibrāhīm] are the Muslims among them; nay, rather the godfearing among them, thus

including among them the Prophets, the veracious, the martyrs, and the righteous and no one else besides them.

There are two questions that arise here. The first question is: why was Ibrāhīm set apart for resemblance [*lashbih*]⁷ to the exclusion of the other Prophets (may Allah send prayers upon them)? The answer is that this occurred either as an honor conferred upon him or a compensation for his act of supplicating for the *Umma* of Muhammad [ﷺ], as he said, "O Lord! Forgive me and my parents and the believers on the Day when the Reckoning is established." [Quran 14:41] Alternatively, it could be that no other Prophet shared with him in that. As for the two of them being set apart for prayers, it is either because Ibrāhīm was an intimate friend [Khalīf] and Muhammad ﷺ was a beloved [Hābib], or because Ibrāhīm was a herald of the Sacred Law [Shariah] when Allah commanded him to "proclaim to mankind the Hajj; they will come to you on foot and on every lean camel," [Quran 22:27] while Muhammad ﷺ was the herald of the religion [Dīn] due to his saying, "O our Lord! We certainly heard a herald calling us to faith..." [Quran 3:193] Or it could be because he [Ibrāhīm ﷺ] asked Allah (the Exalted and Sublime) for it when he beheld Paradise in a dream and saw written upon its trees "There is no god but Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah," whereupon he asked Jibrīl about that and he informed him of [the Prophet Muhammad's] state, so he supplicated, "O Lord! Cause me to be mentioned upon the tongue of Muhammad's nation—and also due to his prayer, "And grant me a goodly mention among the latter ones." Or it could be because Ibrāhīm is the best of the remaining Prophets, prayers and salutations upon them all.

The second question is about the well-known issue pertaining to the likening mentioned in the Prophet's words "as you

⁷ Since it says, "Just as You sent prayers upon Ibrāhīm..." —Fr.

sent prayers upon Ibrāhīm," even though it is established [in the science of rhetoric] that the likened [*mushabbah*] is lesser in degree than the likened to [*mushabbah bihi*], but [here] the reality is quite the opposite, since Muhammad ﷺ alone is superior to Ibrāhīm and the family of Ibrāhīm, not to mention that the family of Muhammad is ascribed to him as well. So the fact that he is superior entails that the prayer requested for him is superior to every prayer that anyone else has received or shall receive.

This question has been answered in several ways, but the answer deemed most satisfactory by Imam al-Nawawī is that of Imam al-Shāhī who said that the likening refers to the family, or the two groups together, or it is a likening to the basis of prayer [*asl al-salat*], as it were, not a likening between the two in rank. This is similar to Allah's words, "Indeed, We have revealed unto you as We revealed unto Nūh..." [Quran 4:163], and Allah's words, "Fasting has been prescribed for you just as it was prescribed for those before you." [Quran 2:183] Now, the preferred position is that the meaning of fasting here is the basis of fasting as such, not a particular fast or time; much like when someone says: "May your child treat you well, just as you treated So-and-so well." For this means good treatment as such, not a specific amount thereof. This is also illustrated in Allah's words, "And do good as Allah has done good to you." [Quran 27:77]

In his *al-Mughnim*, al-Qurtūbī considered this the most correct answer. And the Gnostic, Sayyidī 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha'rānī ﷺ, said in chapter fourteen of his *al-Minan al-Hadīth*:

And of the graces that Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, has blessed me with is my having witnessed with the light of faith and the secret of certainty that our Prophet Muhammad

ﷺ is the absolute best of Allah's creation. As such, none among the inhabitants of the heavens or the inhabitants of the earth rival him in any spiritual station.

Moreover, only one whose spiritual insight Allah has blinded and whose vision is like a bat demands legal proofs to establish the Prophet's superiority. That is because the light of the Prophet's Sacred Law is more luminous than the light of the midday sun. And sufficient as an explanation of his superiority is the consensus of his entire nation, in every land, that he is superior to the first and the last, this being self-evident and declared without hesitation despite the fact that none of them have seen him ﷺ (having only seen his law and heard his guidance). The Prophet ﷺ said, "My nation shall not concur upon misguidance."

In the year 941 AH a man claimed that our master Ibrāhīm ﷺ is superior to our master Muhammad ﷺ. He bolstered his argument by noting that the Prophet ﷺ taught the Companions how to send prayers upon him in the prescribed prayers and said in the hadith on the closing testimony: "just as you send prayers upon Ibrāhīm and the family of Ibrāhīm"—based on the principle of the rhetoricians that "the likened to [*mushabbah bihi*] is greater than the likened [*mushabbah*]."

But what this man failed to realize is that there is a reason for that. When the Companions said, "O Messenger of Allah! You have taught us how to send salutations upon you; how do we send prayers upon you when we are in prayer?" the Prophet ﷺ said, "Say: 'O Allah! Send prayers upon Muhammad and upon the family of Muhammad, just as You have sent prayers upon Ibrāhīm and upon the family of Ibrāhīm....'" The lesson from this statement "just as you have sent prayers upon Ibrāhīm...." is that the Prophet ﷺ was responsible for teaching how to send prayers.

Consider, for instance, if you were to say to someone among the saints and scholars, "Teach me a salutation by which I can magnify you, laud you, and declare your superiority over others"—how could he not either remain silent or speak, but with humility? This is why in the hadith of Ka'b b. Ujra it mentions that he [Ka'b] said, "When we asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ how to send prayers upon him, he remain silent and his face became red, until we wished we had not asked him." (In other words, they wished they hadn't asked because of his great shyness.)

Furthermore, the Prophet ﷺ said, "I am the master of the children of Adam on the Day of Resurrection, and that is no boast." And he is the first person for whom the earth shall split asunder [during the Quickening], and he is the first intercessor and the first person whose intercession shall be accepted—all of this is explicit in demonstrating that the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is superior to all of the creation, including Adam ﷺ.

Allah Most High said, "*He does not speak from his own desires*" [Quran 53:31]; hence the Prophet ﷺ exhibited excellent character toward his father Adam [in this regard] because it is not befitting for a son to say "I am superior to my father" unless there is a divine mandate to do so, such as what is found in the hadith: "Adam and those after him are all under my Standard."

The scholars of Egypt offered their support and wrote refutations against the person in question—assuming he actually held this belief. Those scholars include Sayyidī Muhammad al-Bakrī, Sayyidī Muhammad al-Ramlī, Sheikh Nāsir al-Dīn al-Tablāwī, and Sheikh Nūr al-Dīn al-Tandaatī. I read their refutations publically in a large crowd whose attendees were too numerous to count, and all praise is for Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.

The story of this forsaken denier resembles another story related by Imam al-Shā'rānī ؒ in his *Tabaqāt al-kubrā*, in the biographical entry for the knower of Allah, Sayyidī Abū al-Mawāhib al-Shādhilī. Al-Shā'rānī remarked:

He [i.e., Abū al-Mawāhib ؒ] said, "A dispute had arisen between me and a man from al-Azhar University regarding the saying of the author of the *Burda* (may Allah have mercy upon him):

*The extent of our knowledge is that he is a man
And that he is the best of Allah's creation!*

'The man argued, 'He doesn't have any proof for that!' I replied, 'A consensus has been formed regarding it!' but he did not retract his position. Suddenly, I saw the Prophet ﷺ sitting on the pulpit of al-Azhar Mosque along with Abū Bakr and 'Umar, and he called out to me, 'Welcome, dear beloved!' Then he asked his Companions, 'Do you know what happened today?' They replied, 'No, O Messenger of Allah.' He said, 'This wretched person believes that the angels are better than me!' Upon hearing this they proclaimed, 'O Messenger of Allah! There is no one on the face of the earth better than you!' He ﷺ said, 'So what is wrong with the wretched person who has no life—and if he lives it will be in ignominy, obscurity, and constriction, bereft of mention in this life or the Hereafter—that he believes that no consensus has been reached concerning my superiority? Did he not know that the Mu'tazilites' opposition to Ahl al-Sunna does not diminish the consensus?'

In his commentary on [*Sahīh*] *al-Bukhārī* and in his *al-Mawāhib al-laduniyya*, al-Qastalānī quoted the lordly Gnostic Abū Muhammad al-Marjānī who said:

The secret behind the Prophet's saying "just as You sent prayers upon Ibrāhīm [*ka mā salayta ala Ibrāhīm*]" and "just as You have blessed Ibrāhīm [*ka mā barakta ala Ibrāhīm*]" and the reason why he didn't say "just as you have sent prayers upon Mūsā [*ka mā salayta ala Mūsā*]" is because [Allah's] theophany [*tajallī*] to Mūsā—prayers and salutations upon him—was one of divine majesty and rigor [jalāl], which resulted in Mūsā falling unconscious. On the other hand, the theophany to the Intimate Friend Ibrāhīm—prayers and salutations be upon him—was one of divine beauty [jamāl], as love and intimate friendship are from the effects of the theophany of beauty [*tajallī al-jamāl*].

But this does not imply equivalence between [the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ] and the Intimate Friend [Ibrāhīm]—may Allah's prayers and salutations be upon them both. For the Prophet has only ordered them to invoke [Allah] asking that he receive a divine theophany fitting the same description as the theophany given to the Intimate Friend—prayers and salutations upon him. The hadith in question implies a co-sharing in the description, which is the divine theophany of beauty, not equivalence between the two stations and ranks. That is because the Real, Glorified is He, discloses Himself to two people in different ways, each in a manner commensurate with his rank, despite the fact that both share in the overall theophany of beauty. Each [Prophet], therefore, received a theophany in accordance to his particular station and rank in Allah's sight; the Intimate Friend Ibrāhīm received a theophany of beauty in accordance with his station, and our master Muhammad ﷺ received a theophany of beauty in accordance with his station. This is how the hadith is to be properly understood.

What al-Maṣṭūfī means is that the station of our master Muhammad ﷺ is loftier than the station of our master Ibrāhīm, therefore the prayer to Allah for him is also higher and loftier than the prayer upon our master Ibrāhīm. This strengthens Imam al-Nawawī's opinion that the best answer to the enigmatic likeness of the prayer upon our master Muhammad ﷺ to the prayer upon our master Ibrāhīm (while the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is yet superior) lies in the statement attributed to Imam al-Shāfiʿī, that the likeness is with regards to the basis of prayer, as it were.

The erudite Ahmad b. Hajjar al-Makkī said in *al-Jawhar al-manazzam fi ziyārat al-Qabr al-Sharīf al-Nabawī al-Mukarram*:

The reason why our master Ibrāhīm the Intimate Friend and his believing family have been given preference [over the other Prophets] is because Allah Most High has not joined between blessings and mercy for any others besides them, as seen in Allah's words in Sūrah Hūd: "My Allah's mercy and blessings be upon you, O members of the household. Certainly, He is Worthy of all Praise, the Glorious." [Qur'an 11:73] He is the best of the Prophets after our Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī (may Allah have mercy upon him) said, as quoted in his son's *Tabaqāt [al-Shāfiʿīyya]*:

When a servant sends benedictions upon his Prophet ﷺ in this manner he asks Allah to send prayers upon Muhammad just as He sent prayers upon Ibrāhīm and his family. And when another servant utters the same benediction he asks for another prayer: one different from the prayer asked by the former. This is self-evident, because although the two requests are similar to each other, they are differentiated

by the differentiation of the two seekers. And since these two supplications receive response (as a prayer upon the Prophet ﷺ is an answered prayer), the prayer of the former must be unique from the prayer of the latter, lest there be implied the "attainment of what is already attained" [*tahsil al-hāsil*].

-8-

The Meaning of the Word Blessing (*Baraka*)

[Al-Hāfiẓ al-Sakhāwī said]:

[Linguistically] the word *baraka* means growth and increase in good and nobility. It is also said that it means cleansing and purification from faults. Others say it means the firmness, perpetuation, and continuity of something—taken from the saying of the Arabs, "*barakat al-ibṭ*," in other words: "The camel remained on the ground." This is also the origin of the term *birka al-mā'* [pond], because water remains in it. This was the declared position of Abū al-Yaman b. 'Asākir who said: "The phrase 'and bless [*bārik*]' means 'preserve the honor and nobility you have endowed them with and make it lasting and permanent.'" This is taken from the saying of the Arabs "*barak al-ba'ir*," said when a camel remains in the place where it has knelt.

The word *baraka* can also be used as a good omen. For instance, it is said to a person who enjoys good fortune, "You are blessed," i.e., you are beloved and sought after. As such, the prayer for *baraka* is a request that Allah bestow upon the Prophet ﷺ the greatest and most perfect portion of good, and make it firm and continuous. Thus

The import of this, as Taj al-Dīn al-Subkī remarked in his *Tahqiqāt*, is that "Allah's prayer upon the Prophet ﷺ resembles His prayer upon Ibrāhīm ؑ and his family. This recurs each time a servant supplicates; hence, it is not possible to encompass his Lord's prayers upon him, each of which is equal to all that was attained by Ibrāhīm and his family. And moreover, the number of those who utter this prayer upon him cannot be encompassed. Allah knows best!"

when we say, "O Allah! Bless Muhammad," it means, "O Allah! Perpetuate Muhammad's mention, invitation, and Sacred Law, and increase the number of his followers and devotees! Acquaint Muhammad's nation with his goodness and felicity by allowing him to intercede on their behalf. Enter them into Your Gardens and allow them to reside in the Abode of Your Good Pleasure [*nīlāwān*]."

To invoke Allah's blessings, therefore, is to ask for continuity, increase, and felicity together... As far as I have discovered, no one has declared it obligatory to say "And bless Muhammad" besides Ibn Hazm, whose words might imply a general obligation. He said: "A person should invoke blessings upon him at least once in his lifetime."

-9-

The Meaning of the Word 'Ālamīn

[Al-Sakhāwī] said in *al-Qawl al-badī'*:

The word 'ālamīn found in the hadith of Ibn Mas'ūd and others means the various forms of creation, but there are a range of other opinions concerning it. Some say it is what is contained in the celestial sphere; or what contains a soul; or every contingent being; or every rational being; or mankind and jinn only; or mankind, jinn, angels, and devils. The author of *al-Shāh** [Ismā'īl b. Hammād al-Jawharī] said: "Ālam [means] creation. Its plural is 'āwālim; and ālamīn means the various forms of creation." [Ibn Sīdā] said in *al-Mutkām* [*wa al-muḥīṭ al-ʿālam*]: "Ālam means all of creation. There is no singular for it as such since it gathers a variety of things. Its plural is 'ālamīn."

By saying "in the 'ālamīn," [the Prophet ﷺ] alludes to the prayer and blessing upon Ibrāhīm that were renowned in the worlds, and his nobility and reverence that were widespread. He instructs us that we should invoke a prayer for him ﷺ that resembles that prayer [upon Ibrāhīm ﷺ], and invoke blessings upon him that resemble those blessings, inasmuch as they are widespread and famous

⁸ A famous Arabic dictionary.—Tr

among the creation. The Most High said, "And We left for him a goodly mention among the latter generations, peace be upon Ibrahim." [Quran 37:108-109]

-10-

The Meaning of the Phrase "Indeed, You are Worthy of all Praise, Glorious"

Ibn al-Qayyim said in *Jalā' al-ʿaṣḥām*:

The name *Ḥamīd* corresponds to the morphological pattern *faʿīl*, which means one who is praised [*mahmūd*]; however, the name *Ḥamid* is stronger in meaning than *mahmūd*, because when a word on the pattern of *faʿīl* is used in place of a word on the pattern of *mafʿūl* [from the same triliteral root], it indicates that the quality contained in the word has become a natural disposition, innate trait, and inherent quality—such as saying, for instance, "So-and-so is elegant [*ʿatīf*], noble [*sharīf*], and generous [*karīm*]."

Therefore, the *ḥamid* is he who, on account of the qualities and means of praise within him, is necessarily praiseworthy. Even if no one else praises him he is still praiseworthy within himself. But the one who is praised [*mahmūd*], on the other hand, is the one to whom is linked the praise of the praisers.

The same may be said regarding the differences between *maʿūd* and *mumajjad*, *kabīr* and *mukabbar*, and *ʿazīm* and

mu'azzam. All perfections lead to praise and glory inasmuch as praise makes it necessary to extol and love the one praised. If you love someone but fail to extol him you have not praised him; likewise, if you extol someone for ulterior motives you have not praised him. You will only have praised someone when you extol him and love him. Extolment and love are the byproduct of the causes that engender them, namely, what the praised one possesses of perfect qualities, noble traits, and excellence toward other people. These are the means that engender love; and the more gathered and perfect these attributes become, the more complete and perfect love and praise become.

Now, Allah—Glorified and Exalted is He!—possesses absolute perfection without any imperfection whatsoever, and His is all excellence [*libṣān*], it belonging to Him and coming [to others] from Him. He is, therefore, more deserving of every form of praise and love from all angles; He deserves to be loved for His Entity, attributes, acts, names, and His kindness, and for everything that comes from Him, Exalted is He!

As for the word *mu'ad*, it implies sublimity, profusion, majesty, and praise. It points to Allah's attributes of reverence (and Allah—Glorified is He!—is the Possessor of Majesty and Reverence [Dhū al-Jalal wa al-Ikrām]). This is the meaning of the servant's saying "There is no god but Allah, Allah is the Greatest." The phrase "There is no god but Allah" points to Allah's divinity [*alḥayyūl*] and His singularity in it, and as such, His divinity necessitates complete love for Him. And the phrase "Allah is the Greatest" points to His glory and sublimity, and that in turn necessitates utter reverence, glorification, and exaltation of Him.

This is why Allah frequently distinguishes between these two types in the Quran. He says, for instance, "May Allah's mercy and blessings be upon you, O members of the household. *Certainly, He is Worthy of all Praise, the Glorious.*" [Quran 11:73] So mentioning the names Ḥamīd and Majīd after prayers upon the Prophet ﷺ and his family corresponds fully with this above-mentioned verse.

Prayers upon the Prophet ﷺ encompass praise and glory, for they are essentially Allah's extolment, honoring, and elevating of the Prophet's mention, and His increasing him in love and proximity. As such, it is as if the person sending prayers is asking Allah to increase the Prophet ﷺ in praise and glory. Sending prayers upon the Prophet ﷺ is a type of praise and glorification of him, so it is suitable that the closing phrase of the prayer use these two names, al-Ḥamīd and al-Majīd, because it is legislated for a supplicant to initiate or conclude his prayer with one of Allah's Beautiful Names that is congruous with what he seeks, as Allah says, "And to Allah belongs the Beautiful Names, so invoke Him with them." [Quran 7:180]

In this connection, Prophet Sulaymān ؑ said, "Lord! Bestow upon me a kingdom such as shall not belong to any other after me. *Indeed, You are the Bestower.*" [Quran 38:35] And when Abū Bakr al-Siddiq ؓ asked the Prophet ﷺ to teach him a supplication to say in prayer, the Prophet ﷺ said: "O Allah! Verily, I have wronged myself greatly, and none forgives sins but You; forgive me with a forgiveness from You and have mercy upon me. *Indeed, You are All-Forgiving, the Merciful.*" There are many examples like this.

Therefore, since praise and glory are sought for the Messenger ﷺ through Allah's prayer upon him, this supplication concludes with the names al-Ḥamīd and al-Majīd.

Al-Sakhāwī said in *al-Qawl al-badī'*:

The name Hamīd corresponds to the morphological pattern *fa ʾil*, which means one who is praised [*mahmūd*]; however, the name Hamīd is stronger than it [*mahmūd*]. Hamīd is the one who has attained the most perfect of praiseworthy qualities. Alternatively, it could mean Hāmīd, i.e., one who praises the actions of His servants. The name Majīd comes from *majid*, which is the quality of ennoblement.

The significance of concluding the prayer with these two tremendous names is that one asks Allah to honor, extol, and elevate the Prophet's rank and increase him in proximity, all of which necessitate seeking praise and glory [for him ﷺ]. This indicates that the names al-Hamīd and al-Majīd are mentioned to justify what is requested, or to be appended to the prayer. In sum it means: You are the bestower of successive bounties that merit Your praise, and You are Generous in abundant grace to Your servants. And to Allah is all praise!



Appendix

*Adding the Phrase "our master" (Sayyidinā)
to Prayers upon the Prophet ﷺ*

[Al-Sakhāwī] said in *al-Qawl al-badī'*:

Majd the Linguist [i.e., Majd al-Dīn al-Fayrūzabādī]⁹ Said the following: "Many people say 'O Allah! Send prayers upon our master [Sayyidinā] Muḥammad,' so that requires a bit of investigation. The apparent position is that this phrase should not be said in the prescribed prayer, since preference should be shown to following the wording transmitted in the hadīth and committing to the authentic report. With regards to saying it outside of the prescribed prayer, it should be noted that the Prophet ﷺ objected to a person who addressed him with that appellation—as found in the famous hadīth. There is a likelihood that the Prophet's objections stemmed from his humility, or because he disliked to be praised and lauded in his presence, etc."

That said, it is authentically reported that the Prophet ﷺ said, "I am the master [sayyid] of the children of Adam," and it is reported that he said about al-Husayn, "This son

⁹ Majd al-Dīn al-Fayrūzabādī, author of the magisterial lexicon *al-Qāmūs al-mubīn*.—Tr

of mine is a master [*sayyid*].” He also said regarding Sa‘d, “Stand for your master [*sayyidkum*].” Then there is al-Nasā’i’s report in *Amal al-ʿayn wa al-ḥayla* where Saḥl b. Hunayf said to the Prophet ﷺ, “O my master [*sayyidī*]!” And Ibn Mas‘ūd prayed, “O Allah! Send prayers upon the master of the Messengers [*sayyid al-mursalin*]....”

All of these texts contain clear proof and evidence that it is permissible to add [the phrase] *Sayyidnā*. The one who forbids this addition must furnish a proof from other sources besides the abovementioned texts, because there is no proof garnered from them on the account of the possibilities mentioned. I recall off hand from memory that al-Sanawī (may Allah have mercy upon him) commented in *al-Muhimmāt* that Sheikh ‘Izz al-Dīn b. ‘Abd al-Salām had based his opinion¹⁰ on the question of which is better, to observe propriety [*adab*] or comply with injunctions [*imtiḥān*]? If the former is better then it is recommended [to add *Sayyidnā*], and if the latter is better then it is not, since the Prophet ﷺ said, “Say: ‘O Allah! Send prayers upon Muhammad...’” [i.e., in a wording without the phrase *Sayyidnā*]

Al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Sakhāwī said:

The utterance of those [worshippers] in prayer, “O Allah! Send prayers upon our master [*Sayyidnā*] Muhammad,” consists of mentioning what we have been ordered to say with an additional statement of fact and propriety. On the basis of the abovementioned hadith of Ibn Mas‘ūd (which

is both *maṭṭū* and *manqūf*, but the soundest one is *manqūf*): “Excel in prayers upon your Prophet...,” it is better to add the word *Sayyidnā* than to omit it.

Imams al-Shams al-Ramli and al-Shihāb Ibn Ḥajar concurred that it is recommended to add *Sayyidnā* in prayers upon the Prophet ﷺ, whether in the testification of the prayer or outside of it. Furthermore, Sheikh Muḥammad al-Fāsi said in his commentary upon *Dalā’il al-khayrāt*:

The sound view is that when invoking prayers upon our master [*Sayyidnā*] Prophet ﷺ, it is permissible to mention the words master, leigelord, and similar expressions that express ennoblement, honor, and reverence. Moreover, mentioning these words is preferable to omitting them. They should be said both in and outside of the prayer, save when one engages in worship through the original wording as it has been transmitted, in which case one should limit himself to the original wording out of worship, or utter the invocation as it appears in the narration. Al-Barzali said, “There is no disagreement that everything which expresses ennoblement, honor, and reverence with respect to the Prophet—prayers and salutations upon him!—can be said in a variety of ways. In fact, Ibn al-‘Arabī recounted over a hundred or more.” The author of *Miṣṣāḥ al-falāḥ*¹¹ said, “Beware of shunning the expression of mastery [*sayyidnā*], for in it there contains a secret that shall manifest to those who persist in this act of worship.”

Al-Ḥārūshī mentioned in his *Kunūz al-asrār*, as did ‘Umar al-Fūṭī in his *al-Rimāḥ*:

¹⁰ Ibn ‘Atā’illah al-Sakandari.

¹¹ That is, his opinion that it is permissible and courteous to add *Sayyidnā* after the name Muḥammad ﷺ in the final testification of the prayer.—Tr

Al-Suyūṭī was asked concerning the hadith “Do not *mas-ter* me in the prayer [i.e., do not utter the title *Sayyidunā* before his name in the prayer],” to which he replied: “This hadith is baseless... [T]he only reason why the Prophet ﷺ did not utter the word *Sayyid* when he taught them [the Companions] how to invoke prayers upon him ﷺ was because of his dislike of boast. That is why he said ﷺ, ‘I am the master of the children of Adam and that is no boast.’ But as it pertains to us, we are obligated to exalt and revere him, which is why Allah Most High forbade us from calling him directly by his first name. Allah says, ‘Do not make your calling out to the Messenger like your calling out to one another’ [Quran 24:23].”

Sheikh al-Haṭṭāb said:

The view that appears strongest to me (and which I perform personally both inside and outside of the prayer) is to add the word *Sayyid*.... The practice of the imams has been to add the word *Sayyid* to non-transmitted supplications and to omit it from transmitted supplications, intending thereby to assiduously follow the exact wording [of the hadith text] and avoid adding anything superfluous—seeing as it was taught in that manner—and to stick to the limits set for them. This is what Sīdī Ahmad Zarrūq has said.... [A]nd that was how the author of *Dalāʾil al-khiyār* proceeded ﷺ in his work. He retained the exact wording of the hadith without adding *Sayyid* to it, but added *Sayyid* to the non-transmitted invocations. All of this, however, pertains to what is written down; but as for verbalizing invocations, it is preferable that the word *Sayyid* not be omitted, whether from the transmitted or non-transmitted invocation.

After quoting from al-Haṭṭāb above, the author of *Kunūz al-ʿasrīr* said:

Our teacher al-ʿAyyāshī (may Allah preserve him) was asked about adding the word *Sayyid* to prayers upon the Prophet ﷺ, to which he replied, “Expressing [the Prophet’s] mastery is an act of worship [*al-siyāda ibādah*]!” That is a given, for the one who invokes prayers upon the Prophet ﷺ only intends exaltation of him, so it makes no sense to omit *Sayyid* from the invocation when it is the essence of exaltation.

Ibn Hajar [al-Haytamī] said in *al-Durr al-mandūq*:

There exists a difference of opinion regarding the addition of *Sayyidunā* before Muḥammad [ﷺ]. As for saying it inside of the prayer, Majd the Linguist [i.e., Majd al-Dīn al-Fayrūzabādī] said, “The apparent position is that this phrase should not be said in the prescribed prayer, since preference should be shown to following the wording transmitted in the hadith.” And al-Isnawī said... that “Sheikh ʿIzz al-Dīn b. ʿAbd al-Salām had based his opinion on the question of which is better, to observe propriety [*adab*] or comply with injunctions [*imtihāl*]? If the former is better then it is recommended...”

This is the position to which I have inclined in my commentary upon *al-Ishād* and other works, because when the Prophet ﷺ came [to the Mosque] as Abū Bakr was leading the people in prayer, the latter did not comply with the former’s command to remain in his place. When the prayer was completed and the Prophet ﷺ asked him about his non-compliance, Abū Bakr explained that it was borne of courtesy, saying, “It is not fitting that Ibn Abī Quḥāfa

[i.e., Abū Bakr] should put himself before Allah's Messenger." The Prophet ﷺ approved Abū Bakr's remarks. This is a strong proof that the observance of propriety is better and more suitable than complying with injunctions that are known to be non-emphatic in nature.

I came across a verdict from Ibn Taymiyya where he ruled that one should not [add *Sayyidina*], and went to great lengths explaining it. Some of the Shāfi'i and Hanafi scholars, however, refuted him and took to denouncing him harshly—and they were correct in doing so. There is a report from Ibn Mas'ūd (which is both *maḥfūḥ* [raised] and *maḥqūḥ* [halted]), but the soundest one is *maḥqūḥ* that says, "Excel in prayers upon your Prophet...." and in it he mentions the method of sending prayers, and says, "upon the master of the Prophets...." This is inclusive of invocations said inside and outside of the prayer.


The verifying scholar al-Jalāl al-Mahallī said, "Propriety with the one he [Ibn Mas'ūd] mentioned [i.e., the Prophet ﷺ] is sought after in the Sacred Law through use of the word *Sayyid*, for it is transmitted in the authentic collections [of al-Bukhārī and Muslim], 'Stand for your master,' i.e., Sa'd b. Mu'ādh, whose mastery was through knowledge and religious devotion. The utterance of those in prayer, 'O Allah! Send prayers upon our master Muhammad,' consists of mentioning what we have been ordered to say with an additional statement of fact and propriety. On the basis of the abovementioned hadith it appears that it is better to add the word *Sayyidina* than to omit it."

Another proof that can be used to infer support for this is the narration mentioned by the author [al-Haytamī] at the end of his book where he discusses the unlawfulness of calling out to the Prophet using his first name or agnomen

ﷺ. The author reported from Qatāda who related that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Allah Most High has commanded that his Prophet be held in awe, and that he be exalted, revered, and declared a master." The truth of the matter is that it is always good to use the word *Sayyid* when referring to the Prophet ﷺ!



COMMENTARY ON THE ABRAHAMIC PRAYER

Imam Yūsuf b. Ismā'īl al-Nabahānī 

OF ALL THE SUPPLICATIONS recited by Muslims around the world, perhaps the most oft-repeated are the supplications connected with the five daily prayers, among which is the closing supplication called the *al-Salat al-Ibrahimiyya*, or the Abrahamic Prayer, which extols our master Muhammad Seal of the Prophets ﷺ, his Purified Family, and links him to Prophet Ibrahim ؑ, described in the Quran as “a nation unto himself.”

This commentary on the Abrahamic Prayer, taken from Sheikh Yūsuf al-Nabahani's *Sa ādat al-dārāyn fī al-ṣalāt 'alā Sayyid al-kawnayn* (Felicity in the Two Abodes Through Prayers upon the Master of the Two Realms), examines each phrase of the closing supplication and sheds light on their inner and outer meanings. What does it mean to “send prayers” upon the Prophet ﷺ? What is the meaning of the name Muhammad and what are its unique features? Who are the Prophet Muhammad's ﷺ Family and why are they mentioned in our prayers? Why is Prophet Ibrahim ؑ included in the supplication? And what is the meaning of blessings when it comes to the master of the first and the last? These questions and more are discussed in this work, with Sheikh Yūsuf al-Nabahani's noted spiritual depth, love, and erudition, and is sure to provide the reader with a deeper appreciation and understanding of the subtleties and meanings of the supplication, and bring in turn, Allah willing, an improvement in one's prayers.

Sheikh Yūsuf b. Isma'īl al-Nabahani (1265–1350 AH), hadith scholar, Sufi, jurist, judge, and biographer, was born in Beirut, Lebanon. At the age of seventeen, al-Nabahani studied in al-Azhar University and later became a judge (Qadi) in Lebanon under the late Ottoman Empire. A prolific author, al-Nabahani left behind a staggering collection of works in hadith, fiqh, theology, and most famously, poetry and prose in praise of the our master Muhammad, (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). Al-Nabahani was a paragon of prophetic love (*'ishq*) and his works continue to exercise a profound influence on popular Muslim spirituality.

“O Allah! Send prayers upon [our master] Muhammad, the Unlettered Prophet, and upon the Family of [our master] Muhammad, just as You have sent prayers upon [our master] Ibrahim, and upon the Family of [our master] Ibrahim in the worlds. Indeed, You are worthy of all praise, the Glorious. O Allah! Bless [our master] Muhammad, the Unlettered Prophet, and the Family of [our master] Muhammad, just as You have blessed [our master] Ibrahim, and the Family of [our master] Ibrahim in the worlds. Indeed, You are worthy of all praise, the Glorious.”



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